



International  
Labour  
Organization

## Women in Business and Management

# GAINING MOMENTUM

Abridged Version of the Global Report



ACT/EMP  
Bureau for Employers' Activities





Women in Business  
and Management

# GAINING MOMENTUM

Abridged Version of the Global Report



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# Preface

Promoting gender equality at the workplace is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do. A growing body of evidence shows that utilizing the skills and talent of both men and women is beneficial for enterprises and for society in general. I commend the ILO-Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) for embarking on this research project which brings together statistics and information on measures that can be taken to advance women in business along with analysis and ideas for future areas of focus. I am confident that it will become a key reference document for those seeking updated information and authoritative data on women in business and management.

The report underlines the fact that women's presence in the labour market is increasingly significant for economic growth and development at both national and enterprise levels. It seeks to demonstrate the benefits that enterprises stand to gain in recognizing and supporting women's talent. As women surpass men in educational attainment in most regions, they represent an incredible talent pool and national resource. Women are running more businesses, and consumer-spending decisions are increasingly in their hands. These realities often seem to be overlooked, even though there is an intensive search for global talent and skills as economies are based increasingly on knowledge and technology.

The report shows that women still have to deal with a number of hurdles to reach positions as CEOs and company board members. While they have advanced in business and management, they continue to be shut out of higher level economic decision-making despite the last decade of activism to smash the "glass ceiling".



A wide array of initiatives challenging gender stereotypes, corporate cultures and lack of measures to reconcile work and family responsibilities are discussed and the report calls for a closer examination of the career paths of women and men to ensure that subtle gender biases are eliminated from the very first assignment.

The report stresses that a wealth of resources, good practices, organizational structures and networks are already in place. And, while progress is slow, women who are appointed to the highest positions attract media attention, creating new role models.

More concerted efforts and advocacy are needed to share information on the benefits of utilizing women's talent and skills at all levels, including in the boardroom. While many multinational companies are already on this track, a major challenge is to ensure that national firms, especially medium and large sized firms, receive advice and tools on how to advance women and improve their business outcomes.

National employers' organizations have a strategic and timely role to play as the business world is on the cusp of recognizing how women's contribution to economic decision-making can make a positive difference to the "bottom line" and business performance.

It is heartening to see that, with the support of national employers' organizations, many companies from the developing regions responded to the ILO company survey that provided rich material for the global report. The participatory approach of the report with inputs from national employers' organizations and companies themselves will undoubtedly ensure that it is relevant and useful. Employers' organizations will be able to incorporate elements into their national programmes and activities while companies will find it useful in designing and implementing their business strategies.

Expanding women's businesses and moving more women into decision-making positions involve particularly challenging and complex issues which also reflect the many inequalities that exist at all levels of sex-segregated labour markets.

It is my sincere hope that this report will stimulate and motivate all actors in the world of work to join forces in achieving greater gender equality at all levels. It is a fundamental right integral to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and its Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. It is also a condition for sustainable development.

I also hope that this initiative will inspire our work under the ILO Centenary Initiative on 'Women at Work – a major stocktaking of the status and conditions of women in the world of work that could serve as a springboard for renewed ILO action, with the engagement of our tripartite constituents, to promote full and lasting gender equality and non-discrimination.

**Guy Ryder**  
**Director General**  
**International Labour Office**

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# Background

Gender balance is increasingly seen as good for business. The growing participation of women in the labour market has been a major engine of global growth and competitiveness. And a growing number of studies are reaching the conclusion that gender balance in management teams and boards appears to make financial sense.

Yet why are there still so few women at the top?

The glass ceiling that prevents women from reaching top positions in business and management may be showing cracks but it is still there. More women than ever before are managers and business owners, but there is still a dearth of women at the top of the corporate ladder. And the larger the company or organization, the less likely the head will be a woman – 5 per cent or less of the CEOs of the world's largest corporations are women (ref. Table 1 below).

This report looks at the most recent statistics and information at a global level, and provides a unique insight into the experiences, realities and views of companies in developing countries.

It aims to create greater understanding of the barriers to women's advancement in business and management. It points to possible ways of tackling the issue, highlighting good practices among private sector businesses and organizations that represent them.

- 1 World Economic Forum's 2010 Gender Corporate Gap Report covering the largest companies in OECD countries.
- 2 European Commission, *Fact Sheet on Gender balance on corporate boards> Europe is cracking the glass ceiling, March 2014*, 6 COM(2012) 614: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index_en.htm)
- 3 Source: Latin Business Chronicle, Analysis of Latin 500 as of March 5, 2012.
- 4 Financial Times, 17 January 2014, London
- 5 Fortune.com, 3 June 2014
- 6 Girl.com.au, 6 June 2014, Women are CEOs of six ASX 200 companies (3%) – GasNet Australia Group, Harvey Norman Holding, Macquarie Airports, Macquarie Countrywide Trust, St George Bank and Telecom Corporation of New Zealand.
- 7 South African Business Women's Association, *South African Women in Leadership Census 2011 and 2012*. <http://www.bwasa.co.za>
- 8 Spencer Stuart, *India Board Index 2012, Current board trends and practices in the BSE-100*
- 9 The New Breed of CEOs in Mexico, Heidrick & Struggles, 2010
- 10 European Commission National Fact Sheet, *Gender Balance in Boards*, country France, January 2013.
- 11 Dr Marleen Dieleman, Dr Meijun Qian and Mr Muhammad Ibrahim, *Singapore Board Diversity Report 2013: Time for Women to Rise*, 14 November 2013
- 12 European Commission National Fact Sheet, *Gender Balance in Boards*, country Germany, January 2013.
- 13 Yan (Anthea) Zhang, professor of management at China Europe International Business School, Shanghai, China, *Lessons For Executive Women From Chinese Boardrooms in Forbes.com*, 10 September (there were 2,100 publicly listed companies in 2010).
- 14 Human Rights Commission, *Census of Women's Participation*, 2012, New Zealand

**Table 1: Women CEOs of public listed companies**

Stock exchanges	Percentage	Stock exchanges	Percentage
OECD <sup>1</sup>	< 5.0	European Union <sup>2</sup>	2.8
Latin 500 <sup>3</sup>	1.8	FTSE 100, UK <sup>4</sup>	4.0
US Fortune 500 <sup>5</sup>	4.8	ASX 200 Australia <sup>6</sup>	3.0
JSE South Africa <sup>7</sup>	3.6	BSE 100 India <sup>8</sup>	4.0
Mexico Expansion 100 <sup>9</sup>	3.0	CAC 40 France <sup>10</sup>	0.0
SGX Singapore <sup>11</sup>	4.6	DAX 30 Germany <sup>12</sup>	0.0
China <sup>13</sup>	5.6	NZSX 100 New Zealand <sup>14</sup>	5.0

## Company survey conducted by International Labour Organization's Bureau for Employers' Activities

A 2013 survey conducted by the ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) among around 1,300 private sector companies in 39 developing countries captures the extent to which the companies have policies and measures in place to promote women in management. Companies were asked what they saw as the main barriers to women's advancement and what kind of practical measures they would consider effective. They also were asked how national employers' organizations could help them implement initiatives to achieve equal opportunity for women and men in their career paths. Workshops held with national employers' organizations in five regions during 2012-13 also provided qualitative and quantitative data and information on women in business and management.

### Gaps in data

A number of international surveys on women in business and management focus solely on the largest stock exchange companies. Others cover a limited number of countries or companies. While some are repeated over time, many are one-off surveys. In addition, while the ILO provides a comprehensive set of statistics on women and men in management and as employers, this data is only available with both private and public sectors combined, making it difficult to track trends in the private sector. Many representatives of employers' organizations from the developing regions have indicated that data on women in business and management in the private sector of their countries was practically inexistent.

The ILO company survey together with the above-mentioned regional workshops represent a key contribution to help fill these data gaps, especially as they were concentrated on small and medium as well as large and multinational companies in emerging regions and developing countries with large informal economies.



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# The business case for advancing women in business and management

Academics and analysts have been examining to what extent more gender balance in management teams and boards actually improves business performance and if the “bottom line” is negatively affected when all decision-makers are men only. Several important studies, some mentioned below, have concluded that women’s participation in decision-making is positive for business outcomes, though some indicated there might not be a direct causal link.

McKinsey & Company researched the relationship between organizational and financial performance and the number of women managers. It found that European listed companies with more women in their management teams had 17 per cent higher stock price growth between 2005 and 2007, and their average operating profit was almost double their industry average.<sup>15</sup>

A 2011 report of the organization Catalyst<sup>16</sup> found that Fortune 500 companies with the most women board directors outperformed those with the least by 16 per cent on return on sales. Companies with the most women on their boards outperformed those with the least by 26 per cent on return on invested capital. Companies with

<sup>15</sup> McKinsey and Company, Women Matter: Gender diversity a corporate performance driver, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Catalyst is a leading non-profit organization in the US aimed at expanding opportunities for women and business through research, advisory and networking services.

“Women may well be the dominant source of economic growth in the near future – and organizations that are able to capitalize on the roles women play as economic actors will most likely have a competitive advantage as the world pulls out of the global recession.”

*Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited<sup>18</sup>*

*“The Gender Dividend: Making the business case for investing in women”*

high representation of women – three or more – on their boards over at least four to five years, significantly outperformed those with low representation by 84 per cent on return on sales, by 60 per cent on return on invested capital and by 46 per cent on return on equity.<sup>17</sup>

In 2012 Credit Suisse<sup>19</sup> compiled a database on the number of women – since 2005 – sitting on the boards of the 2,360 companies constituting the MSCI AC World index.<sup>20</sup> This research was more comprehensive in terms of geographical scope than other studies, covering all regions except Africa. The outcome shows that, over the previous six years, companies with at least one female board member outperformed by 26 per cent those with no women on the board in terms of share price performance.

While there is considerable research on how gender balance in management impacts the bottom line, making causal links is still a challenge. It has been noted that companies that promote women to top jobs are often those that invest a great deal in research, innovation and technology. More research, especially in developing regions, would be of immense value, especially for those many organizations that are actively advocating for greater inclusion of women in all walks of life.

But there is no lack of research pointing to the hurdles experienced by women on the corporate ladder, as well as on measures that have been successful in promoting women in business and management.

While women have greatly increased their share of management jobs and as entrepreneurs over the last two decades, all data sources and analyses report a continuing dearth of women in top decision making positions, as CEOs and board members. The situation is not much better in politics: In March 2014, just 18 women were heads of state, and women were only 22 per cent (22.9%) of all elected parliamentarians worldwide in April 2014.

The ILO company survey in the developing regions found that women were just over 20 per cent of CEOs. The survey respondents were mostly middle to large national companies. This reflects that more women are able to reach top jobs in local companies as compared to large publically traded businesses and international companies.

Women Board Members: The 2013 Catalyst Inc. survey of the percentage of board seats held by women over recent years in 44 countries is shown in Table 2 below. The results indicate that in just four countries women represent over 20 per cent of board members (Finland, Sweden, Norway and United Kingdom); in 13 countries between 10 and 20 per cent; in 14 countries between five and 10 per cent and in 13 countries less than 5 per cent.

17 Catalyst, *The bottom line: corporate performance and women's representation on boards (2004-2008)*, March 2011

18 Greg Pellegrino, Sally D'Amato, Anne Weisberg, *The Gender Dividend: Making the business case for investing in women*, 2011 [www.deloitte.com/genderdividend](http://www.deloitte.com/genderdividend)

19 Credit Suisse Research Institute (2012) *Gender Diversity and Corporate Performance*.

20 MSCI ACWI stands for Morgan Stanley Capital International All Country World Index. It is a market capitalization weighted index designed to provide a broad measure of equity-market performance.



**Table 2: Percentage of board seats held by women, Latest year**

>20%	10-20%	5-10%	<5%
Finland	Australia	Belgium	Bahrain
Norway	Austria	Brazil	Chile
Sweden	Canada	China	India
United Kingdom	Denmark	Greece	Japan
	France	HK China	Kuwait
	Germany	Indonesia	Oman
	Israel	Ireland	Portugal
	Netherlands	Italy	Qatar
	Poland	Malaysia	Rep. of Korea
	South Africa	Mexico	Russia
	Turkey	New Zealand	Saudi Arabia
	Switzerland	Singapore	Taiwan
	USA	Spain	UAE
		Thailand	

Source: Catalyst Inc. Knowledge Center, "Quick Take: Women on Boards", 3 March 2014

The ILO company survey found that 30 per cent of the respondent companies had no women on their boards, while 65 per cent in total had less than 30 per cent women; 30 per cent being often considered as the critical mass required for women's voices and views to be taken into account. Thirteen per cent had gender-balanced boards with between 40 and 60 per cent of women.

When it comes to a woman being the chairperson of a company board, the percentages decline sharply. While data from different sources vary, they generally show the small degree to which women are leading boards – generally in the range of zero to a few per cent. The 2013 GMI Ratings Survey<sup>21</sup> found that only in Norway was the proportion more significant at 13.3 per cent, followed by Turkey at 11.1 per cent. In the 44 countries covered by the survey there were 19 countries in which not a single company had a woman board chairperson. In a number of countries there was some increase in the percentage of women as chairpersons from 2009 to 2013 while in others it declined.

The ILO company survey found that 87 per cent of the boards of respondent companies had a man as president while 13 per cent had a woman as president.

Some commentators describe progress as "glacial" and consider that unless action is taken it could take 100 to 200 years to achieve parity at the top. One consequence of this inertia is that a number of countries have moved to legislate controversial mandatory quotas for women on company boards, with Norway being the first. The European Union is currently considering extending these to its member states with a draft Gender Directive passed by the European Parliament in November 2013 and still under consideration by the European Council of Ministers as of mid-2014. Other countries, notably Australia, Canada, Hong Kong China, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Pakistan, United Kingdom, United States of America, while stopping short of quotas, have adopted a variety of measures to promote more women in management, such as inclusion of gender diversity requirements and reporting in corporate governance codes, codes of conduct, voluntary targets and cooperative initiatives between business and government.

<sup>21</sup> GMI Ratings 2013 Survey: Women on Boards, GMI Ratings is an independent provider of research and ratings on environmental, social, governance (ESG) and accounting-related risks affecting the performance of public companies. GMI Ratings is the combined entity of Governance Metrics International, The Corporate Library and Audit Integrity, which all merged in December 2010.



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## “Glass walls”: Women concentrated in specific management functions

One of the reasons why it can be more difficult for women to be selected for top management jobs is that their management experience is not sufficiently diverse. They have not been exposed to all types of company operations during their careers and thus have not gained sufficient experience in general management across several functional areas. The ILO company survey in the developing regions confirms trends already identified in a range of studies and surveys. The concentration of women in certain types of management reflects the “glass walls” phenomenon, which is segregation by gender within management occupations. While women are gaining access to more and higher levels of management, there is a tendency for them to be clustered in particular managerial functions. Figure 2 below illustrates that a greater proportion of companies participating in the survey have 100 per cent women compared to 100 per cent men in managerial functions such as human resources, public relations and communications management, and finance and administration. Fewer companies have 100 per cent women or more than 50 per cent women in managerial functions such as operations and sales managers, research and product managers and general managers. In addition, more companies have more than



Figure 1: Gender segregation in management occupations



Illustration : Céline Manillier

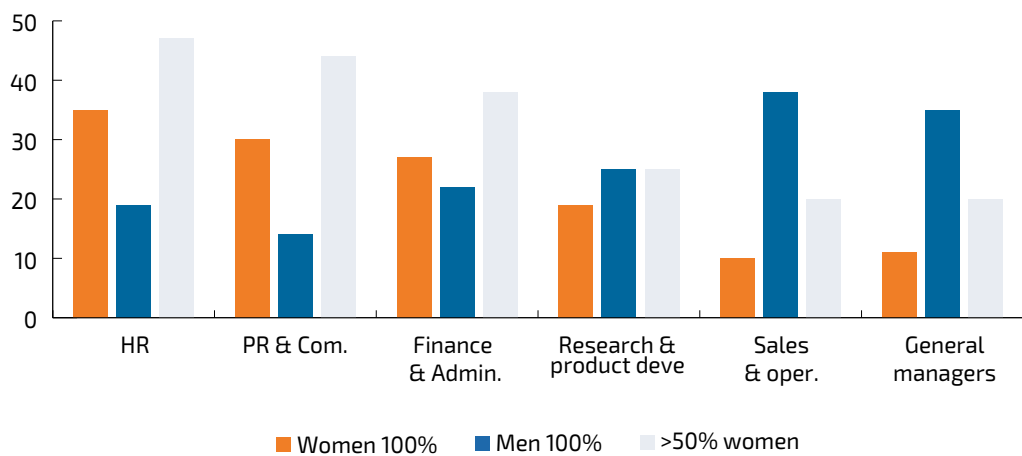
Source: ILO

- Attaining experience in managerial functions, such as operations, sales, research, product development and general management, is crucial for women to rise through the central pathway to the top of the organizational hierarchy (shown in blue).
- However, women are often siloed in managerial functions such as human resources, public relations and communications, and finance and administration, and are therefore only able to go up the ladder to a certain point in the organizational hierarchy (shown in orange).

50 per cent women in the first three types of management compared to the latter. Attaining experience in the latter is vital for ascending the central pathways of the organizational pyramid (see Figure 1 above) to reach top positions. As a consequence women may “go up the ladder” only to a certain point as the managerial functions they exercise are located on the sides of the pyramid.

Companies responding to the ILO company survey also identified some other types of managers and the proportion who were women. Among the sample responses, ICT managers appeared to be men more often than not, while there were more women as quality control and procurement managers.

**Figure 2: Percentage of companies with women and men in different types of management**



Source: ILO company survey, 2013

“In nine years of measuring the global gender gap, the world has seen only a small improvement in equality for women in the workplace. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2014, launched today, the gender gap for economic participation and opportunity now stands at 60% worldwide, having closed by 4% from 56% in 2006 when the Forum first started measuring it. Based on this trajectory, with all else remaining equal, it will take 81 years for the world to close this gap completely.”

*Global Gender Gap Report 2014,  
World Economic Forum*

# Barriers to women's leadership

Much has been written about the leadership barriers for women – in popular magazines and in social and financial media columns, as well as in scholarly articles and PhD theses the world over. Common issues include age-old gender stereotypes, whereby men and women are expected to perform different social and economic roles. Family responsibilities and male-dominated corporate culture are two other concerns. These are largely influenced by cultural, religious and social norms that date back centuries but remain deeply ingrained in all regions, even though the world of work and society has greatly changed. Historically, this has translated into specific occupations being considered more suitable either for men or for women. Traditionally, management, running a business and decision-making in the public arena were viewed as the domains of men. These norms have also informed educational curriculum and recruitment and promotion policies for many decades. While these are now being addressed to eliminate gender bias, they remain deep in the psyche of a broad spectrum of men and women.

Company respondents to the ILO company survey conducted across developing regions ranked what they considered the most significant barriers in order of priority as shown in Table 3 below.

Consolidated rankings may mask important differences between regions. Nevertheless, all regions except Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) identified the same top 5 or 6 barriers relating to women's and men's social and reproductive roles on the one hand and on the other the reflection of these in workplace structures, e.g. corporate culture and women not gaining adequate line management experience to position them for top jobs.

All regions also identified inadequate labour and non-discrimination laws as the least significant barrier. The lack of flexible solutions as a barrier for women was ranked 10 out of 15. However, for much of Asia as well as the Caribbean nation of Jamaica it was ranked 6 and 2 respectively. While most regions identified roles assigned by society to men and women as one of the top barriers, CEE countries only ranked this as 9 out of 15. While CEE companies ranked women having more family responsibilities than men as the top barrier, they ranked men not being encouraged to take leave for family responsibilities as the second highest barrier and in third place the lack of a strategy for the retention of skilled women. In fifth place CEE ranked inherent gender bias in recruitment and promotion.

**Table 3: Ranking of Barriers to Women's Leadership**

1.	Women have more family responsibilities than men
2.	Roles assigned by society to men and women
3.	Masculine corporate culture
4.	Women with insufficient general or line management experience
5.	Few role models for women
6.	Men not encouraged to take leave for family responsibilities
7.	Lack of company equality policy and programmes
8.	Stereotypes against women
9.	Lack of leadership training for women
10.	Lack of flexible work solutions
11.	Lack of strategy for retention of skilled women
12.	Inherent gender bias in recruitment and promotion (ranked the same as)
12.	Management generally viewed as a man's job
13.	Gender equality policies in place but not implemented
14.	Inadequate labour and non-discrimination laws



© Tim Robbins

# Glass ceiling still intact and female talent underutilized

For over a decade, media, scholarly articles and institutions have called for the dismantling of the “glass ceiling” that bars women from top positions. The “glass walls” within hierarchal structures that reproduce occupational segregation also create subtle barriers making career pathways different for women compared to men. Yet today, women are catching up and surpassing men in academic achievement.

At the same time companies are reporting difficulties in attracting and retaining talent generally and women in particular. While there is much unemployment, the lack of workers with the right skills sets and knowledge required by a range of economic sectors is increasingly a challenge. The ILO company survey revealed that 34 per cent of the companies responding indicated that retention of women was a problem to a great extent, while another 16 per cent said it was a problem to some extent.

Yet, there is plenty of evidence of the benefits to business of tapping into the talent pool that women represent – including being in tune with a consumer market increasingly driven by women, benefiting from the innovation and creativity that gender diversity can bring, improving corporate governance and, as a result, enhancing company outcomes.





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# An expanding pool of female talent

The world of work has changed dramatically in the last generation due to falling fertility, aging of populations and migration, as well as increased access to education and technology. ILO data indicates that women now hold over 40 per cent of jobs worldwide.

Research demonstrates that women's ever increasing participation in the labour market has been the biggest engine of global growth and competitiveness. Human capital has become key for companies to maintain a competitive edge in economies around the world that are increasingly based on knowledge and technology. Business groups and development actors increasingly view gender equality as an important plank for long-term economic growth and development. A recent study<sup>22</sup> by Booz & Company points out that in terms of emerging markets, women consumers and entrepreneurs across the world altogether represent the "third billion" after the first and second billion markets in China and India.

## Women with business experience

Today, women own and manage over 30 per cent of all businesses, ranging from self-employed (or own account workers), micro and small enterprises to medium and large companies. However, women tend to be concentrated more in micro and small enterprises. They represent around 24 per cent of all employers in all regions except the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) where they are around 6 per cent. By comparison, women represent 31 to 38 per cent of own-account workers across all regions except the MENA countries, where they make up almost 13 per cent of those who are self-employed.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> | Booz & Company, Empowering the third billion: Women and the world of work, 2012

<sup>23</sup> | ILO statistical database, table on employment by sex and status, June 2014.



## Women with management experience

Over the last 20 years women have been filling the ranks of management particularly at middle and even senior management levels (see Table 4 below).

**Table 4: Women's percentage share of all managers, ILO, Latest years until 2012**

Rank	Country	Year	%	Rank	Country	Year	%	Rank	Country	Year	%
1	Jamaica	2008	59.3	36	Canada	2012	36.2	69	Czech Rep.	2012	26.2
2	Colombia	2010	53.1	37	Namibia	2004	36.0	70	Italy	2012	25.8
3	Saint Lucia	2004	52.3	38	Sweden	2012	35.5	71	Greece	2012	25.1
4	Philippines	2012	47.6	39	Bolivia	2009	35.1	72	Guinea	2010	23.9
5	Panama	2012	47.4	40	Portugal	2012	34.6	73	Chile	2012	23.6
6	Belarus	2009	46.2	41	Azerbaijan	2012	34.2	74	Mauritius	2012	23.4
7	Latvia	2012	45.7	41	U.K.	2012	34.2	75	Macedonia	2012	23.1
8	Guatemala	2012	44.8	42	Georgia	2007	34.0	76	Viet Nam	2009	23.0
9	Bahamas	2009	44.4	42	Rwanda	2012	34.0	77	Albania	2009	22.5
10	Moldova	2012	44.1	43	Venezuela	2012	33.4	78	Ethiopia	2012	22.1
11	Uruguay	2011	43.9	44	H.K., China	2012	33.2	79	Malaysia	2012	21.5
12	Bermuda	2010	43.5	44	Switzerland	2012	33.2	80	Liberia	2010	21.4
13	Barbados	2004	43.4	45	Slovakia	2012	33.1	81	Indonesia	2010	21.2
14	Trinidad & Tob.	2010	43.1	46	Estonia	2012	32.8	82	Zimbabwe	2011	20.6
15	United States	2008	42.7	47	Ireland	2012	32.6	83	Uganda	2009	20.2
16	Cayman Is.	2012	42.4	48	Belgium	2012	32.4	84	Cambodia	2010	18.0
17	Mongolia	2012	41.9	49	Kyrgyzstan	2012	32.3	84	Luxembourg	2012	18.0
18	Belize	2005	41.3	49	Paraguay	2012	32.3	85	China	2005	16.8
19	Aruba	2010	41.0	50	Norway	2012	32.2	86	Tanzania	2006	16.5
19	Nicaragua	2006	41.0	51	Mexico	2012	32.1	87	Cyprus	2012	15.8
20	Seychelles	2011	40.8	52	Israel	2012	31.8	88	Yemen	2010	15.2
21	New Zealand	2008	40.0	53	Macau, China	2012	31.4	89	Kosovo	2012	14.8
22	Iceland	2012	39.9	53	Romania	2012	31.4	89	Tunisia	2012	14.8
22	Ukraine	2012	39.9	53	Singapore	2008	31.4	90	Iran, Is. Rep.	2010	14.6
23	Ecuador	2012	39.7	54	South Africa	2012	31.3	91	Palestine	2012	14.4
24	France	2012	39.4	55	Germany	2012	31.1	92	Kuwait	2005	13.9
25	Russian Fed.	2012	39.1	56	Argentina	2012	31.0	93	Maldives	2010	13.4
26	Ghana	2010	39.0	57	Austria	2012	30.0	94	Morocco	2008	12.8
26	Slovenia	2012	39.0	57	Spain	2012	30.0	95	Turkey	2012	12.2
27	Lithuania	2012	38.8	58	Finland	2012	29.7	96	Japan	2012	11.1
28	Botswana	2010	38.6	59	Peru	2012	29.3	97	Korea, Rep.of	2012	11.0
28	Domin.Rep.	2012	38.6	60	Serbia	2012	29.1	98	Syria	2007	10.2
28	Hungary	2012	38.6	61	Netherlands	2012	29.0	99	U.A.E.	2008	10.0
29	Cuba	2010	38.1	62	Vanuatu	2009	28.5	100	Egypt	2012	9.7
30	Poland	2012	37.8	63	Denmark	2012	28.4	101	Oman	2000	9.3
31	Brazil	2012	37.3	63	Sri Lanka	2012	28.4	102	Lebanon	2007	8.4
32	Kazakhstan	2010	37.2	64	Thailand	2012	28.2	103	Saudi Arabia	2008	7.1
33	El Salvador	2012	37.1	65	Costa Rica	2012	27.9	104	Qatar	2007	6.8
34	Madagascar	2010	36.6	66	Bhutan	2012	27.6	105	Bangladesh	2011	5.4
35	Bulgaria	2012	36.4	66	Croatia	2012	27.6	106	Jordan	2004	5.1
35	Kiribati	2010	36.4	67	Montenegro	2012	27.3	107	Algeria	2004	4.9
36	Australia	2012	36.2	68	Malta	2012	27.0	108	Pakistan	2008	3.0

Source: ILO Statistical Database, employment by occupation: managers, June 2014.

Total 126 countries ISCO 88 and ISCO 08 (ranking 1-108 with 14 sets of two countries and two sets of three countries having the same percentage share, marked in blue).

\* Data for USA from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Management Occupations from Household Survey Data, 2012, Washington.

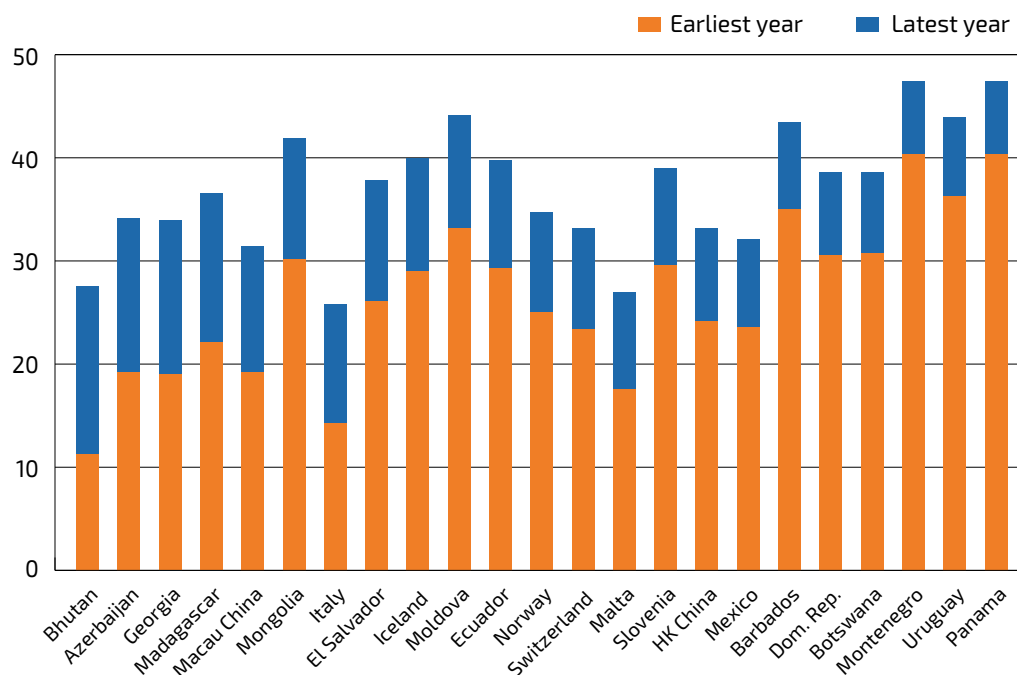
Behind these average global statistics there are great variations between countries within each region and between regions, with some countries having a tiny per cent of women engaged in business activity while in other countries, women run nearly half of all businesses.

## Women are increasing their share of managerial jobs

ILO data shows that women's labour market participation rates are generally still proportionally higher than their share of management jobs, and in many countries the gap is considerable. However, women are gradually increasing their numbers as managers. In the majority of countries for which ILO data was available over time during the last decade, women have increased their share of management jobs. In 77 per cent – or 80 of the 104 countries for which ILO data was available, the proportion of managers who were women increased. In 23 countries the increase was by 7 per cent or more as shown in Figure 3 below. However, in some 23 countries women's share of management actually fell, despite their increasing labour force participation and their higher levels of education. This indicates that gains made in the advancement of women in management are not always sustained and can be easily reversed unless there are concerted efforts to consolidate progress. The countries that saw a decline in women managers are from all regions and levels of development. In only a few cases did both the labour force participation and the proportion of women in management decline.

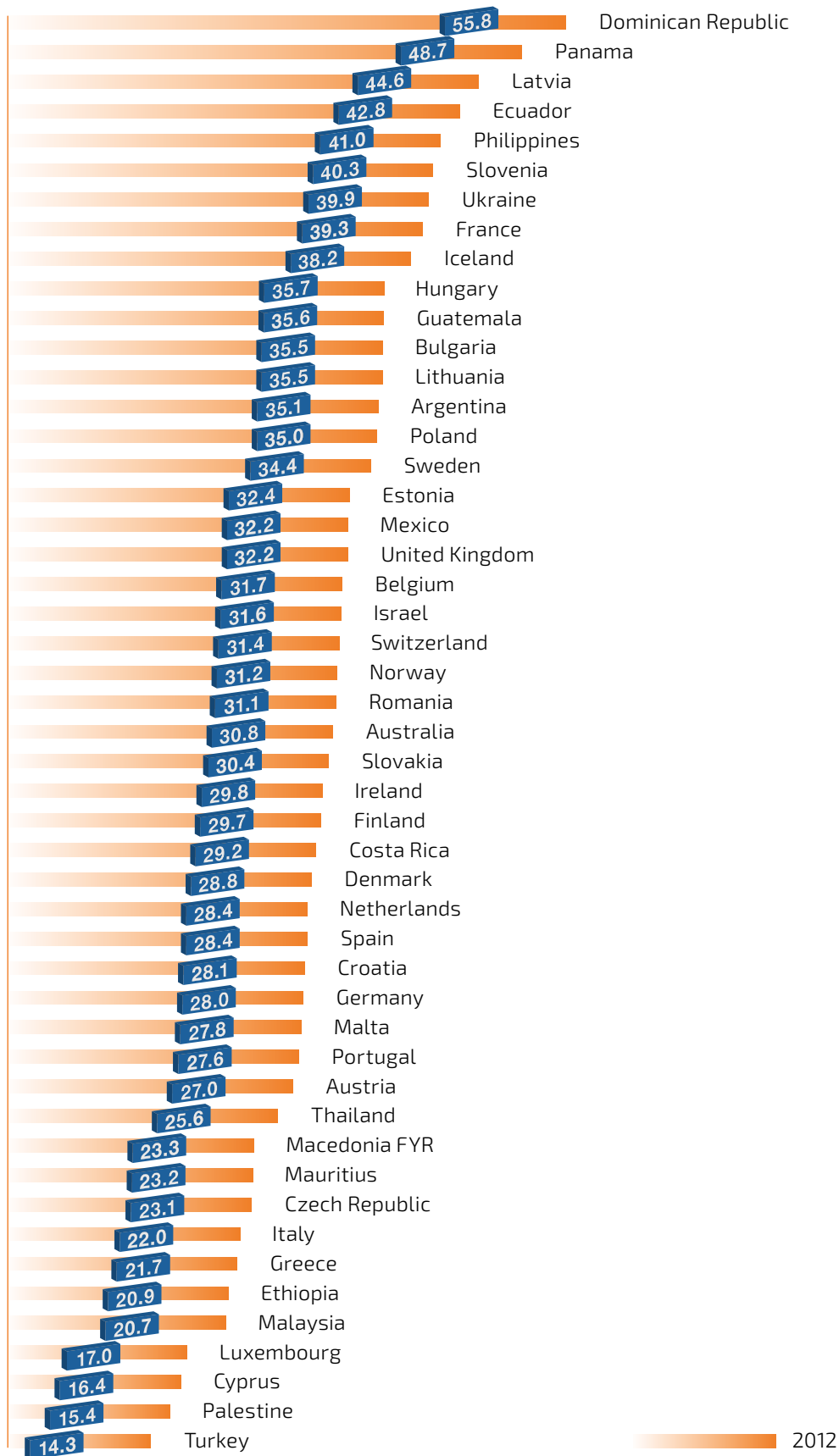
Women reaching senior management positions in greater numbers is critical for building a pool of potential candidates for the top jobs such as chief executive officer (CEO) or company president. ILO data provided by 49 countries give an indication of the proportion of women in senior and middle management in the private and public sectors combined in 2012 as shown in the Figure 4 below. Given that legislative quotas

**Figure 3: Countries with 7 per cent or more increase in the share of women in management 2000-2012**



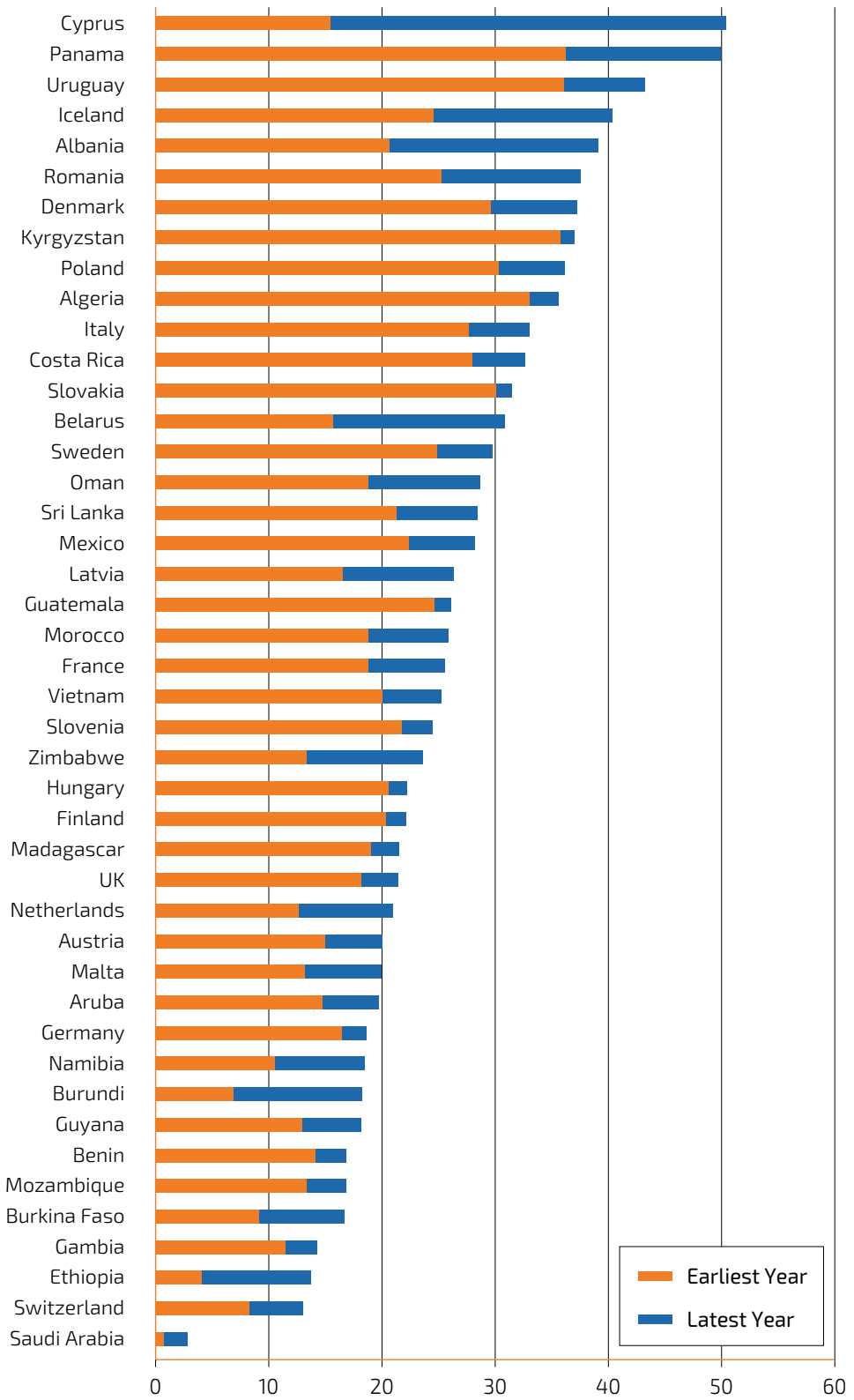
Source: ILO statistical database, Female share of employment by occupation; managers, 2014

Figure 4: Percentage of senior and middle-level managers who are women, ILO, 2012



Source: ILO statistical database, from female share of employment in senior and middle management, June 2014

Figure 5: Increases in percentage of graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction who are women, selected countries, latest years 2000-2012



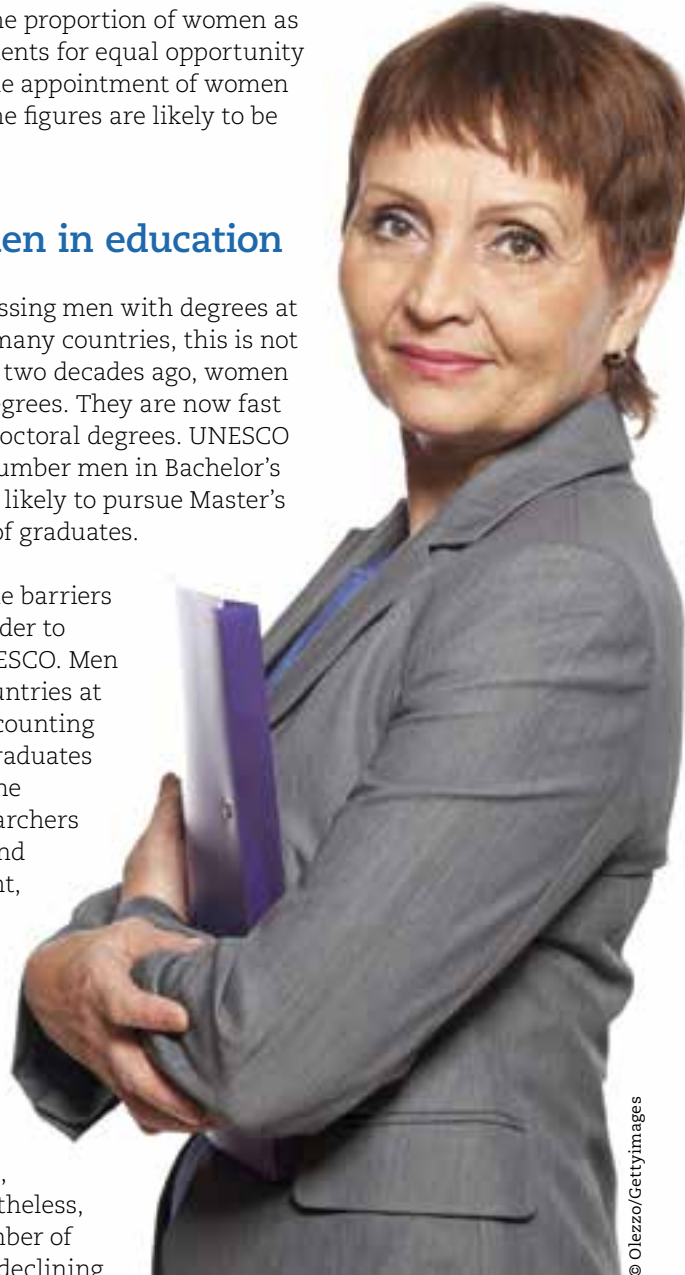
Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, June 2014

in many countries have boosted the proportion of women as legislators and that legal requirements for equal opportunity in the public service are driving the appointment of women at higher levels of management, the figures are likely to be lower for the private sector alone.

## Women overtaking men in education

In most regions, women are surpassing men with degrees at Bachelors' and Masters' levels. In many countries, this is not a recent phenomenon and already two decades ago, women had reached parity in obtaining degrees. They are now fast catching up with men in gaining doctoral degrees. UNESCO reports that globally, women outnumber men in Bachelor's degrees and that women are more likely to pursue Master's degrees, representing 57 per cent of graduates.

Women, however, face considerable barriers as they move up the education ladder to research careers, according to UNESCO. Men surpass women in virtually all countries at the highest levels of education, accounting for almost 55 per cent of all PhD graduates and 71 per cent of researchers.<sup>24</sup> The highest proportion of women researchers are found in the Latin American and Caribbean region with 45.2 per cent, followed by Europe with 34 per cent average.<sup>25</sup> Differences in the choice of study focus between men and women are declining in many areas. While engineering for example is still dominated by men, more women are taking up this area in an increasing number of countries, as shown in Figure 5 above. Nevertheless, there are countries where the number of women qualifying as engineers is declining.



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## Women as consumers

As a consequence of their significantly increased entry into the labour market and the world of business, women's purchasing power has shot up. They often control household budgets and financial decisions, and an increasing proportion of women make more money than their spouses and partners. As a result, women are significant consumers and clients of products and services. Therefore, it makes good business sense that their views and preferences are represented by women as well as men in decision-making roles in enterprises.

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO, Chiao-Ling Chien "Women in Higher Education"

<sup>25</sup> UNESCO, Women in Science, UIS Fact Sheet, August 2011, No.14. NB Data for North America not available for this fact sheet.

## Challenges in expanding the talent pool of women

Social customs and traditional gender roles in many countries and certain regions, such as the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, greatly influence the role women are able to play in labour markets and in decision-making generally. However, as a means to enhance economic growth, there is increasing governmental and societal support for the education and economic engagement of women as long as social and religious norms, particularly in relation to family responsibilities, are respected. The route for women to gain access to management positions is thus being opened up with efforts to counter the low labour participation rates of women and to create a larger pool of qualified women. Some multinational companies are spearheading the hiring of women and promoting more women in their management structures in such countries. In a bid to nationalize their labour markets, the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia are providing incentives to speed up women's entry into the labour market, including as managers and business owners. While these initiatives are implemented within the framework of the social requirements concerning physical segregation of men and women at workplaces, they nevertheless provide new opportunities for women to earn income and to apply their knowledge and education at technical and managerial levels.

In many parts of the globe, the main role of women is still perceived as carers for families and households. In terms of sheer daily hours of work, this has given rise to the so called “double burden” of being a worker, a career or business woman in addition to attending to family needs. “Flexibility”, “priority setting” and “multitasking” have become part of the vocabulary associated with managing busy schedules that span from early morning to late evening most days of the week.





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# Getting rid of the glass ceiling and glass walls

Many women report they do not want to be the subject of special treatment or quotas, but what they do need are *flexible solutions* to manage work and family time commitments. This is also increasingly true for men who want to spend more time with their families. Others point to the pressures of social and cultural norms. Yet, again others call for a closer examination of “corporate culture” in terms of how inclusive it is of women. They also suggest an overhaul of internal processes, procedures and structures of companies as well as accountability to shareholders in relation to recruitment and promotion in order to eliminate subjective and gender-biased appointments and decisions. It is also pointed out that differences in generations play a significant role in addressing gender equality. Young men and women alike are often well-prepared and ambitious and have high expectations of work-life balance.

There is no doubt that in addition to the sheer force in numerical and qualitative terms of women’s talent entering the labour market there has been an intensification of efforts to tackle the glass ceiling in recent years. An increasing number of studies and surveys are focusing on the business case for more women executives and board members. Monitoring of women’s presence on boards has also been intense in recent years in an increasing number of countries and is often linked to issues of overall corporate governance, under the spotlight especially since the world financial crisis.

Across the globe, mainstream media and magazines specialized in management, finance and gender issues regularly include columns on women in business and management. Statistics on women in decision-making positions in parliaments and the

*“The cracks might be bigger but the ceiling is still not shattered”*

Kunyalala Maphisa,  
President,  
Businesswomen’s  
Association,  
South Africa, 2011

private sector are periodically compiled and published by various groups.<sup>26</sup> Networks of businesswomen and gender-related courses in management institutions and business schools have mushroomed around the world. Companies, governments, international organizations, academic institutions and NGOs have implemented numerous programmes and initiatives to advance women in business and management.

Women’s entrepreneurship has attracted a great deal of attention and resources as part of a global effort to advance women’s economic status and the well-being of their families. This is particularly the case in many developing countries where the informal economy is the dominant form of economic activity and the existence of formal enterprises is limited.

It could be argued that there is a groundswell of action that could be signalling that the world is on the cusp of change and more and more women will be appointed to top positions in the coming years. Others consider that there is still a long way to go in dismantling the glass ceiling. What is important for companies of all types and sizes is how they can benefit from the growing talent pool and market that women represent today. And how national employers’ organizations can provide advice and support to their members in this regard.

So what are the policies being applied to advance women in business and management? Table 5 below shows the extent to which companies replying to the ILO company survey

<b>Table 5: Implementation of company policy measures</b>			
<b>Policy Measures</b>	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>% NO</b>	<b>% N/A</b>
1. Maternity leave	84	10	6
2. Access to skills training	75	18	7
3. Recruitment, retention and promotion	70	19	11
4. Access to executive training	66	25	9
5. Work life balance	62	22	16
6. Mentoring	59	27	14
7. Flexible working hours	56	31	13
8. Targets for gender balance in recruitment	51	30	19
9. Parental leave	51	31	19
10. Sexual harassment	50	30	20
11. Paternity leave	44	38	18
12. Child care	44	36	20
13. Part time working hours	44	40	16
14. Care for sick family members	44	36	20
15. Sponsorship	44	21	35
16. Re-entry programmes	40	35	25
17. Career breaks	38	36	26
18. Executive training specifically for women	33	47	20
19. Remote work or telework	30	45	25
20. Elder care	28	48	24

Source: ILO company survey, 2013

were implementing 20 different policies. They are ranked according to the greatest number of companies implementing a specific policy.

The majority of companies responding to the survey indicated that they have policies for the first 10 policy measures in the above table. The most common policy was that of maternity leave, followed by access to skills training and measures for the recruitment, retention and promotion of women.

Maternity leave in many countries is required by law. However, some respondents indicated they provided more than the statutory requirements.

Fewer companies provided family friendly measures such as childcare and elder care, career breaks and re-entry programmes. While 66 per cent of respondent companies provide access to executive training generally, half of this number provided executive training specifically for women. That companies indicated N/A to many of the 20 policies reflects that the meaning of the policy measure was not understood, that the information was not available or unknown, or that such policies were not applicable given the nature of the company operations or the characteristics of their employee population.

In addition to the above policies, a good number of respondents pointed out the problem of transport for women due to the dangers associated with sexual harassment on public transport and the concerns of families and spouses about women travelling, especially in the evening. Thus, in the developing regions, companies often provided transport for women and also in some cases women could leave work earlier with company transport if there were law and order disruptions.

Some respondents also indicated they implemented other policies such as canteens, nursing rooms for feeding babies or expressing milk and separate toilets for women. A number of respondents mentioned that they follow the global diversity policy of their international parent companies.







# What can companies do?

Respondents to the ILO company survey indicated the kind of follow-up and practical support that would be helpful to their companies to advance women in business and management. Table 6 below indicates how the companies ranked the support mechanisms in order of priority.

**Table 6: Suggested support mechanisms**

Explain and provide evidence on the business case for more women in management
Network with other companies on good practices
Provide good practice examples of measures and strategies to promote women in management
Develop a strategy to promote more women in management
Design an equal opportunity policy
Network with women's business associations
Provide guidelines on gender sensitive human resource management systems
Develop guides on measures and strategies to promote women in management
Introduce a mentoring scheme
Design a sexual harassment policy
Introduce a sponsorship scheme

There is already a wealth of resources, knowledge and good company practices, as well as many organizational structures and networks in place to advance women in business and management.

There are influential studies<sup>27</sup> debating whether and how women can have it all – career and family. And whether men can have it all too. Research examines differences in men’s and women’s attitudes and behaviour to career progression. It raises questions on psychosocial aspects as to what extent it is women themselves who are reluctant to accept or push for management positions and why. There is much analysis on why women appear to display more feelings of lack of confidence – not considering themselves ready or qualified for a promotion, discouragement, the absence of role models and not feeling accepted by peers and superiors, etc. On the other hand, studies also demonstrate that confident, well-prepared women are not being recognised, not given opportunities and have to work harder than men to be promoted even when they are more qualified. There are many case studies of successful businesswomen and managers with families describing the different strategies they employed to “make it”. It is critical to keep in mind that not all women are the same or are in the same circumstances, just as is the case for men. In addition, over a lifetime, circumstances and skill sets can also change. Generalising about the roles and attributes of women and men can easily lead to gender stereotyping.

27 | E.g. Sheryl Sandberg “Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead”, Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All”, July/August 2012 Atlantic Magazine.

Overcoming gender stereotypes long embedded and institutionalised in the structures and culture of companies, organizations and business associations is one of the main areas to tackle if women are to be given an equal chance as men to progress to top positions. Women themselves are often struggling to go beyond the education they have received which defines the activities, behaviour and jobs that are appropriate for women or for men. Many business women’s organizations and associations are providing services, training and support to build the confidence and capacity of women and to encourage them to pursue career and business opportunities.

For companies to overcome gender stereotyping, there are a number of actions that can be considered such as the following:

## Changing “mind-sets”

“Mind-sets” can be influenced and changed through awareness workshops and training on the concept that women, like men, are not a homogeneous group; that diversity, including gender balance, can contribute to more creativity and innovation as well as harmonious work teams. Furthermore, diversity is not just about physical appearances and preferences. There is also the evolving concept of “diversity of thinking” stemming from the recruitment of employees and appointment of managers from different backgrounds and life experiences. It is considered by an increasing number of companies that this concept provides new and more effective approaches to problem-solving and innovation that a homogenous group may not produce. As women constitute half the world’s population, they have much to contribute, but given that their gender role assigned by society is primarily as care givers, perceptions in the workplace of their potential and capability as managers can be limited. As a result, efforts may not be made to invest in measures to balance work and family demands.

Above all, these kinds of perceptions and roles are not true of all women, as many are and remain single. Others may marry or have partners, but do not have children. Yet again, others have children, but can have arrangements in place that allow them to perform well at work. Generally across the world, women are having fewer children, especially educated women, meaning that there are more work-productive years than ever before in a woman’s life and the reproductive or maternity periods can be relatively short compared to a lifelong career. Overcoming the mind-set that women cannot be managers or business leaders because their main role is seen as a reproductive one, is one of the principal challenges. In fact, many argue that



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women who manage families and household budgets make excellent managers at the workplace, as they are often experts in time and financial management, multitasking and priority setting. On the flip side, a common mindset of both men and women to be overcome is that managerial jobs are jobs for men. This is due to men being perceived as the primary breadwinner (which is less and less the case in today's labour market) and having the innate attributes required to lead and manage. The latter is also evolving according to what is considered successful management styles with attributes commonly identified with women and men both being required to be a competent manager.

### **Examining the business case for gender diversity**

Recent studies help explain why and how it might be worthwhile for a company to pay more attention to promoting women. Above all, despite high levels of unemployment and underemployment in many countries, there are skills and talent shortages as economies depend increasingly on technology and knowledge to generate growth. With females being half of the population, girls and women receive almost half of educational resources and so represent a significant proportion of the available talent pool. Therefore, company investment in attracting, retaining and promoting skilled women is likely to bring advantages to the business. Attaining gender balance in senior management teams and in company boards has been shown to reap economic dividends.



## Adopting an equal employment opportunity

Adopting an equal opportunities employment policy and ensuring that all employees are familiar with the policy and that managers enforce it, sends a message within the company and beyond that equal opportunity is a corporate value.

## Adopting a sexual harassment policy

Adopting a sexual harassment policy and procedures for addressing cases is important not only as a deterrent, but also because sexual harassment can be a subtle undermining of the harassed person's performance and can lead to the loss of valued employees and managers. Again, all employees need to be aware of the policy and managers in particular should not only enforce it but also be held to account if they themselves perpetrate harassment.

## Reviewing human resources development

Companies can consider reviewing their human resource management arrangements to ensure that gender biases are not overtly or subtly at work slowing down women's career progress. This involves examining prospecting, recruitment, promotion and succession planning procedures and ensuring that men and women are equally encouraged and considered. Making such procedures as transparent and objective as possible is also important so that both men and women understand what is required and what to expect.

Research on gendered **job descriptions** shows that the way they are worded can be more appealing to either men or to women. The types of questions asked in job interviews should be exactly the same for men and women. Questions about family status and intentions about getting married or having children, if asked at all, should be posed to both male and female candidates. These types of questions could be reviewed to assess whether they are really relevant for the particular job.



A critical issue is whether the very **first assignments, projects and tasks** that are given to men and women are the same or different. Research shows that this may well be the starting point of women falling behind on the managerial track. While women nowadays are as qualified or have higher academic achievements than their male counterparts recruited by firms, they often are not given the same level of responsibility, visibility and variety of positions that may “stretch” them and prepare them for higher positions. Various reasons are put forward for this, including gender stereotyping (what is considered suitable for men and for women) and some women themselves not knowing how to – or not wanting to – put themselves forward for more challenging assignments. Yet again, other women are ready to take up opportunities but are not encouraged or are overlooked. This situation occurring early in the careers of women (even before they are married or have children) is a key issue, and addressing it requires determination and awareness on the part of company and personnel managers, as the process by which men and women’s career trajectories take off in different directions can be initially quite subtle and indiscernible.

For those women reaching **middle or senior management level**, there is also a phenomenon where they fall behind their male counterparts. Again various reasons are put forward, including that women themselves may be reluctant to take on higher levels of responsibility, as there are limited options for meeting family demands such as flexible working hours and childcare arrangements. This may even lead women to leave a company for another or to start their own business. On the other hand, occupational segregation within management itself, leads women to be concentrated more than men in support management functions such as human resources, public relations, finance and administration and corporate social responsibility. These types of management functions are not usually regarded as the appropriate preparation for top management positions. This situation again calls for careful attention to the tasks, projects and responsibilities assigned to women compared to men, at all stages of the career path, if the so called “leaking pipeline” of women’s talent is to be fixed.

Companies often provide **management and technical training** for employees. For women to have an equal chance, it is important to ensure that they participate in such training, and if they do not take part, to find out the reasons. These could include lack of encouragement, perceptions that such training is not for them, or that the time at which training is held conflicts with family demands. For social or cultural reasons, it can be more effective to arrange specialised management training specifically for women.

**Childcare** is a huge challenge for working parents everywhere, especially in countries where there is little public provision. Lack of affordable quality care is one of the primary reasons women, more than men, drop out of the workforce generally. Women in developing countries often rely on domestic help and extended families, although this is changing in large urban environments as families relocate for jobs. When a woman reaches management level, she may very well be able to pay for services, and much also depends on the situation of her partner. There are more and more stay-at-home dads and fathers working part-time. It may also be a deliberate life choice for the woman to stay at home with the children. There is a growing childcare industry in many countries, but such services are usually not sufficient to meet demand. The main issue in the discussion on availing of women’s talent and women’s own self-development remains how the lack of childcare facilities and arrangements affects women’s career paths and eventual opportunities to prepare for management responsibilities.

Employers may want to examine how investment in childcare assistance, flexible working hours, part-time work, job sharing (including for management positions), telework and leave arrangements can bring added value to the company through the

recruitment and retention of talented women. It is important that these measures have active take-up from men as well, as some men are concerned that caregiving might be held against them in the workplace. This feeds into the perception that men are more commonly preferred in recruitment because they will focus 100 per cent on their work.

**Mobility** in terms of relocation or business trips is often a criterion for promotion to management positions. However, for many women this poses a significant challenge again due to family demands or the expectations of their spouses, families and society. There are also cultures in which women need to be accompanied by a male member of the family for travel, which can entail an added expense for the company. Reviewing how women can gain needed experience in other ways, for example through teleconferencing, briefing and debriefing sessions with other employees who can be mobile, or building in mobility experiences early on in their careers before marriage and children. Also, perhaps less emphasis can be given to mobility as one criterion among others.

Similarly, **transport** to and from the workplace can be unsafe for women travelling alone in many countries. Employers providing safe and reliable transport, especially in the evenings can be a way of retaining women employees and managers. Alternatively, if teleworking is an option, women employees may be released earlier and then compensate with teleworking later.

Employers have traditionally given special support to employees displaying potential for management responsibility. Often in the past, male employees benefitted from such initiatives such as **mentoring programmes** and networking opportunities. This has been increasingly extended to women, and various types of mentoring schemes have been experimented with, including senior male or female managers paired with younger women employees. While senior managers passed on corporate knowledge and advice to younger women, these programmes have also transmitted



much information from the mentee women to senior management about how women experience the prevailing company culture. More recently, initiatives such as “**sponsorship**” have taken hold as it is thought that mentoring is still not enough to help women work through the “labyrinth” of unwritten rules and requirements. They need someone high up in the company to vouch for them and guarantee that they are given the visible assignments and projects that will allow them to demonstrate their capacity and so move up the career ladder. Sponsoring a woman with high potential is a commitment for the senior manager which should not be taken lightly. The role goes beyond just giving advice as in a mentoring programme. Management will be looking for the positive impact of sponsorships over time, with more sponsored women actually being appointed to top positions.

**Networking** has been a traditional way to learn the corporate culture and unwritten rules and procedures. A problem for women employees and managers is the so-called “old boys’ network”, which sometimes may arise from attending the same schools or sports activities. Employers can be more aware of reinforcing such networks at the recruitment stage. They can also support internal networks, which are inclusive of women. Support for women-only networks, where women can learn from each other and feel free to express their ideas and feelings, can be an effective way for women to gain confidence and knowledge and so advance their careers. Such networks can be within the company or between companies. There are also independent networks of women managers. Encouraging women to be part of such networks provides a good learning and support opportunity for them.

Taking a critical look at the company or corporate culture can identify to what extent it is inclusive or exclusive of women and of diversity generally. Corporate culture can include regular practices, procedures and behaviour, rituals and celebrations, the way meetings are conducted and who conducts them, the formation of work teams, physical layout of the workplace, and out of working hours gatherings. Are all these inclusive of and respectful of women equally with men? Are women assuming leadership roles in any of the above? Also, the messages from top management on what is expected of employees in terms of human resources policies and performance, become part of corporate culture and a standard measure of performance. A common challenge for women in many corporate cultures has been the absolute availability of the employee, especially managers, “any time, any place”. Given women’s role as care-givers, this conflicts with family demands. But as society and gender roles are changing, men also want to spend more time with family. Thus a company may lose valued managers, both women and men, if there are not more flexible arrangements and performance based on outputs and results rather than time and place presence. There is a growing realisation that achieving more harmony between life and work enhances employee well-being and job satisfaction and therefore increases productivity and innovation not only of rank and file employees but also of managers.





# Role of advocacy

Compared to a decade or so ago, there are considerable experiences and practices around the world of companies attracting and retaining female talent and promoting women to senior management. The level of interest and sharing of good practices has increased, which is a testimony to the importance that is being attached to fostering female talent.

Nevertheless, much advocacy is still needed to overcome the typecasting of women and men into narrow traditional roles. Further, more recognition needs to be given to the fact that both men and women today are assuming a far wider array of roles and responsibilities than in previous eras, including women as top decision-makers in the economic and political arenas. The media, while a tool for advocating a far richer and varied spectrum of gender diversity, itself often reproduces extremely stereotypic gender roles. This includes advertisements for laundry detergents or other household cleaning products that almost invariably portray women. This is true for both developed economies and the developing regions. Messages are often subliminal, but over time they contribute to public perceptions of gender roles, reproducing stereotypes that do not correspond to the reality of men's and women's lives, especially the younger generations. There are still very few advertisements that challenge the traditional gender roles, as for example showing a man changing a baby's diaper. Today, there are more women news anchors and talk show leaders but men still dominate particularly on political and economic issues.

Another challenge is to disseminate information and good practices to a wider group of businesses. Often, it is large and multinational companies that have invested in gender diversity and promoting women as managers as a means to attract and retain female talent in order to gain a competitive edge. However, in the scramble for skills and talent, national companies, particularly those that are large and medium sized, stand to gain by examining the benefits of gender diversity and promoting more women managers and board members.



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# Role of national employers' organizations

National employers' organizations are critically important as they already have key networks of national businesses and programmes in place. There are many examples of employers' organizations setting up structures to support women and gender equality, as well as developing programmes, particularly with women entrepreneurs. However, there is often a capacity challenge for employers' organizations to reach out to businesswomen and their associations as well as to effectively advocate to their member companies on the business case for gender equality and to provide advice, tools and good practices on why and how to promote women in management. Promoting gender equality and women in business and management go hand-in-hand as inequality at work and at home has been a primary reason for women's traditional lack of access to managerial jobs.

Enabling employers' organizations to carry out these roles is an essential goal of the ILO, which includes gender equality as an integral part of its decent work agenda, international labour standards and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. These principles are part of the UN Global Compact, which, with over 10,000 participants including over 7,000 businesses in more than 145 countries,



is viewed as the largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative in the world. In addition to individual companies, business associations and organizations are participants in the Global Compact. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact have also collaborated to draw up a set of seven *Women's Empowerment Principles*<sup>28</sup> for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

<sup>28</sup> | The Women's Empowerment Principles: [http://www.unglobalcompact.org/issues/human\\_rights/equality\\_means\\_business.html](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/issues/human_rights/equality_means_business.html)

With the evolution of labour markets, the high educational and skills levels of women and their growing role in national economies and political life, women today hold a wealth of talent and resources that can be tapped by companies large and small. Employers' organizations can play a key role on creating greater awareness among their members of this potential and advising on how to adapt policies and practices at the company level for women's talent to be optimised and for women to participate in decision-making and so improve business outcomes.

## **EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS**

### **Women's Empowerment Principles**

- Principle 1:** Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
- Principle 2:** Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination
- Principle 3:** Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
- Principle 4:** Promote education, training and professional development for women
- Principle 5:** Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
- Principle 6:** Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
- Principle 7:** Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality



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# The way forward to promoting more women in business and management

The two boxes below detail the kinds of measures and actions companies and employers' organizations could consider to advance more women in business and management. These measures emanated from the five regional workshops organized by the ILO in 2012-13 in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, Eastern Europe and CIS countries, which brought together employer and private sector representatives, and gender experts from more than 57 countries.

## What companies can do to promote women in management?

- Awareness on the business case for more women in management
- Equal Opportunity/Diversity Policy – written and disseminated
- Sexual Harassment Policy – procedures and penalties
- Sensitization of company managers on gender stereotyping and diversity approaches
- Assessment of employee profiles (sex, age, skills, etc.)
- Survey/consultation on employee needs in relation to family responsibilities
- Setting targets and establishing a monitoring and reporting system
- Career planning for both men and women
- Ensure equal access to training for men and women/special training for women
- Assign young women challenging and visible tasks, assignments, projects
- Expose women as well as men to operations across the company
- Flexible working arrangements (time and place – telework)
- Re-entry programmes after career breaks/staying in touch during leave
- Encourage male employees to engage in family care (leave, working hours, etc.)
- Assist in child and elder care arrangements
- Results based employee performance evaluations
- Encourage networking
- Mentoring (unwritten rules and processes)
- Sponsorship to the top
- Company/industry awards
- Appoint women to senior management, CEO, Company Board and Board Sub Committee members
- Appoint women managers to key/strategic roles, not only HR, finance and CSR managers
- Foster role models (women managers, male gender champions) and use them as examples or inspiration
- High level management commitment essential!

## **What employers' organizations can do to promote women in business and management?**

- Awareness raising of EO staff on the business case for gender diversity and equality
- Design and implement an internal policy on gender equality
- Awareness of EO staff on strategies for companies to promote women in management
- Gender balance in EO staff – role model
- Consider mechanisms/structures within the EO to implement gender related activities
- Consider conducting a participatory gender audit within the EO to establish a baseline and the way forward
- Provide guidance to member affiliates and companies on promoting women in management and assistance with self- assessment or audit of the company's needs
- Develop or strengthen links with business women's associations to know about their experiences and strategies and to provide 'voice' to their goals
- Policy advocacy on addressing obstacles to women's entrepreneurship (access to credit facilities, resources, BDS, training, etc.)
- Policy advocacy on legal frameworks that can promote women's access to decision-making in private sector
- Partnerships with academic institutions for research and with media for advocacy on women in business and management
- Launch annual awards, exhibitions and fairs, to attract public and media attention



Women have made many gains in access to education, and it follows that they have increased access to employment. Today, a third of the world's enterprises are run by women, and their management skills are increasingly recognized as well. There is more and more evidence that achieving gender balanced and diverse management teams at all levels in the hierarchy produces positive business outcomes. Yet age-old gender stereotypes still overshadow women's contribution to businesses. Top of the list of stereotypes across all social and cultural contexts is their ability to balance work and family responsibilities.

Women business owners are mostly concentrated in small and micro businesses. Still less than 5 per cent of CEOs of the largest global corporations are women. The higher up the corporate ladder and the larger the organization, the fewer the women. The "glass ceiling" is still intact. Women are succeeding as high-level administrators, human resources and public relations managers. But "glass walls" prevent them taking up strategic management positions leading to the top. Companies are losing out on women's contribution to their bottom line. *Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum* brings together all available data including ILO statistics to provide a comprehensive, up-to-date and global picture on women in the business world and in management positions. It highlights not only the obstacles women still face but also the business case for gender diversity and offers recommendations on the way forward.

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