
Not ready, still waiting:

Governments have a long way to go in preparing to address gender inequality and the SDGs

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COVER PHOTO: Bhagwati Tharu spent 25 years working for free as a bonded 'Kamaiya' labourer in her landlord's house in Nepal. After liberation, she and her husband moved onto land given to them by the government, but her name was not on the deeds. 12,000 Kamaiya women have received joint land ownership certificates since they were freed from bonded labour in 2000. Bhagwati is still waiting. She is an active member of the Kamaiya women's group, and is pushing her case forward with ActionAid's support.

PHOTO: CREDIT: RUTH KELLY/ACTIONAID

Overview

Governments urgently need to improve their policy readiness if they want to have any chance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on inequalities. Governments in developing countries¹ do not yet have the laws and policies in place to allow them to achieve SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 10 on reduced inequality within and among countries. In ActionAid's study, **only three of ten developing countries had over 65% of key inequality-reducing policies in place.**² To make things worse, rich countries are not adequately supporting developing countries to achieve the SDGs, contrary to SDG 17's aim to "revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development". Indeed, some rich countries' domestic and development policies deepen inequalities globally. Ultimately, governments' failure to address women's inequalities may jeopardise achievement of all SDGs³

The focus of the inequality debate generally has been on reducing income inequality. But this ignores the fact that inequality has a more severe impact on women. ActionAid's experience shows that reducing income inequality will not be enough to change women's lives; laws and policies must

also respond to the multiple and overlapping inequalities that affect different groups of women. Significant among these are violence against women and girls (VAWG), the inequalities facing women in education, health, mobility,⁴ obtaining decent paid work, unequal access to and control over land and resources, and unpaid care burden.⁵ **ActionAid analysed that the total amount of both paid and unpaid work undertaken by women and men and found that globally, a young woman entering the job market today can expect to work for the equivalent of an average of four years more than her male peers over her lifetime, as she is balancing both paid and unpaid care work.** This amounts to the equivalent of an extra one month's work for every woman, every year of a woman's life.⁶

In *The Price of Privilege* ActionAid shows how powerful forces at the global level prevent countries from addressing inequalities.⁷ Blockages at the national level also stop laws and policies to reduce inequalities from being put in place. For example, social protection is recognised as a key redistributive policy with positive effects in reducing inequality, yet only two of the ten developing countries ActionAid studied have comprehensive coverage.⁸

1. ActionAid use the terms "developing" and "developed" countries, whilst acknowledging the flaws in this terminology, as well as other terminology such as high/medium/low income and global north and south. All countries experience inequalities and must have inequality-reducing policies. All countries must achieve all of the SDGs.
2. ActionAid studied whether governments in Brazil, Ghana, Haiti, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia were policy ready to achieve SDG 5 and SDG 10. Brazil, South Africa and Ghana had over 65% of policies in place. See Box 1 on Methodology for details.
3. UNDP (2016) *Africa Human Development Report: Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa*. See: www.undp.org
4. When we talk about mobility we refer to women's ability to move around their community; to leave the house, access paid work, take public transport etc. Women and men experience mobility in different ways due to their predetermined social reproductive and productive roles. See ActionAid (2013) *Women and The City II: Combating violence against women and girls in urban public spaces – the role of public services*. Available at: <http://www.actionaid.org/publications/women-and-city-2>.
5. Unpaid care work includes all those activities that go into maintaining a household and caring for others in the home and community. It includes chores such as cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood in rural areas, taking care of the ill and elderly, and participating in community work. See Budlender, D. and Moussié, R. (2013) *Making care visible: women's unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya*. Johannesburg: ActionAid. Pp.7. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/making_care_visible.pdf.
6. This figure looks at total additional hours that women work compared to men on average globally, taking account of both paid and unpaid work. Unpaid work includes unpaid care but also additional activities, such as working in family enterprises and volunteering. Analysis undertaken by Economists Without Borders for ActionAid UK. See section 2 of Annex for basic methodology and key caveats. More details available at: www.actionaid.org/inequality.
7. ActionAid (2016) *The price of privilege: extreme wealth, unaccountable power, and the fight for equality*. Johannesburg: ActionAid. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_price_of_privilege_lr.pdf.
8. Brazil and South Africa both have comprehensive legal coverage. See ILO (2014) *World social protection report 2014/15: building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*. Geneva: International Labour Office. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-dgreports/-dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_245201.pdf.

In this report, ActionAid looks at where governments are policy ready and where they are not, identifying where key policies, laws and supportive environments will allow governments to take the first step towards greater economic and gender equality.

ActionAid believes that empowered communities pushing for change can make the change sustainable. For example, women's collective action in Nepal has led to the adoption of a strikingly progressive constitution that commits the government to measuring women's unpaid care work.⁹ Policy or laws alone may not always lead to change but their existence strengthens civil society campaigns for change on the ground. To improve their policy readiness to achieve the SDGs, civil society and national governments should:

1. **Shift policy decision making power** away from those who currently hold power and influence, including multilateral institutions, rich-country governments, elite groups, and multinational corporations, and towards developing country governments and their people.
2. Develop and hold governments accountable to **redistributive national plans** with policies that support the accomplishment of the SDGs. Such policies would aim to:
 - recognise, redistribute and reduce women's unpaid care work
 - improve opportunities for decent work and

wages for women and young people

- stop violence against women and girls
 - improve women's mobility, and their capacity to organise and participate in decision-making at all levels
 - improve women's access to education and health, and their access to and control over natural and economic resources.
3. Put in place appropriate **systems, governance, financial support, and monitoring and evaluation** programmes so policies can be designed with a genuine "feminist lens" insisting that women's development potential be at the centre of analysis and decisions. Those systems should be implemented with sufficient information, infrastructure and budget, and rigorously monitored by women and girls who are given the power to hold decision-makers accountable.

In a forthcoming study, *Shifting Power*, ActionAid will look at developing-country women's perspectives of inequality and show how women's collective action can spur implementation of improved policies and change cultural norms, thus reducing inequalities women face. ActionAid recognise that policies and laws are only the starting point. However, it is clear that having the right policies and laws in place is a crucial first step towards genuine change for women.

9. Jayasinghe, D. and Noble, R. (2014) *Integrating women's rights into wider social movements in Kathmandu, Nepal: challenges, opportunities and effectiveness*, London: ActionAid. Available at: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/integrating_womens_rights_into_social_movements_in_nepal_2015.pdf; and Nepal Government (2015) *The Constitution of Nepal*. Available at: http://www.nepalembassy-germany.com/pdfs/Constitution_full_english.pdf.

1. Not ready: Do governments have laws and policies in place to reduce gender inequalities?

Developing countries

Governments have not yet put in place the policies and strategies needed to reduce intersecting inequalities behind women's poverty and exclusion, as called for in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this report, ActionAid studied whether governments in Brazil, Ghana, Haiti, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda & Zambia were policy ready to achieve SDG 5 – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – and SDG 10 – reduce inequalities within and among countries. Box 1 below outlines the methodology.

Of the ten countries ActionAid studied, only three (Brazil, South Africa and Ghana) had more than 65% of key inequality-reducing policies in place. Three countries (Senegal, Uganda and Zambia) had less than 50% in place. Liberia co-chaired the high level panel on the post Millennium Development Goal process but has only 57% of these policies in place.¹⁰ It has only been a year since the SDGs were agreed but ActionAid believes that countries can do more to get on track. See policy readiness table for details.

BOX 1: Methodology

This study looked at policy readiness for SDG 5 and SDG 10 in ten developing countries, representing the regions where the ActionAid federation works: Brazil, Ghana, Haiti, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia.

The SDGs are universal, meaning that all countries should achieve all the goals. Beyond the developing countries studied, this report also looks at government readiness for SDG 17 in Australia, Denmark, UK and the US, in terms of their global commitments.¹¹ The analysis was done using a composite indicator that ActionAid developed, incorporating trade, aid, tax, funding for women's rights organisations, and business ethics.

ActionAid chose three targets from SDG 10 and four targets from SDG 5, selecting one or two policy readiness indicators per target. For example, indicators for target 10.4 on social protection were: a) is there a minimum wage and b) is the social protection legal framework comprehensive?

ActionAid researched information from global sources and then each of the ten countries studied had staff and external experts validate the indicator table using 'yes/no' responses. Each target could get one point (or if using two policies, half a point each). This offered a crude comparison of policy readiness across countries. Where over 70% of policies had been adopted, the government got a green light. Where over 50% of policies had been adopted, the government got an amber light. Where 50% or fewer of policies had been adopted, the government got a red light. See policy readiness table for results.

10. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/beyond-2015-reducing-poverty-after-the-mdgs>. UK Government (2013) 'Beyond 2015: Reducing poverty after the MDGs'. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/beyond-2015-reducing-poverty-after-the-mdgs>.

11. This is because ActionAid does not work on gender inequality *within* these countries.

‘Leaving no one behind’ is one of the overarching principles of the UN 2030 Agenda, from which the SDGs are drawn. However, by identifying only ‘severe *income* inequality’ as a key issue, policy makers risk leaving many behind.¹² Yes, income inequality is stark but it is only one of multiple inequalities that women face. As outlined below, effective policy must respond to women’s unpaid care burden (i.e. through social protection), to violence against women and girls (VAWG) to their inferior access to education and decent work, to their lack of mobility, and to the limitations

on women’s ability to access and control land and resources.¹³ These policy responses can be financed through progressive taxation.

Effective social protection is essential to lift women and girls out of poverty and exclusion, and to give them the time and space to take action to change their lives. Social protection policies can help alleviate the care burden usually shouldered by women by offering care for older and younger family members. This allows carers, usually women, to have more time for paid work or leisure activities.



Hajara Saleh is 29 years old, has three children and lives in Nigeria. She used to have an immense amount of housework to do because, in addition to her immediate family, she had to cater for her parents in law. Hajara said that she used to work so hard that she couldn’t always stand straight and was hospitalized a couple of times. After ActionAid’s unpaid care work meetings she would sit with her husband and talk about the challenges, and he began to support.
PHOTO: FEMI IPAYE/ACTIONAID

Yet only two countries out of the ten studied, Brazil and South Africa, have a social protection system with what the ILO considers a “comprehensive

scope of legal coverage”.¹⁴ Civil society in these countries are pushing to ensure that the scope is expanded further. In South Africa, social protection

12. In his address to the High Level Panel Forum on Sustainability in 2016, Mr Wu Hongbu – United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs focused on ‘income inequality’. Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21324Remarks%20USG%20Mr.%20Wu.SDG%20Report_OUSG_TRACK_ht_for%20posting.pdf.
13. Other issues such as women’s sexual and reproductive health needs are also important, but we do not study these here.
14. ILO (2014) *World social protection report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*, Geneva: International Labour Office. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_245201.pdf.

grants enable young women to improve their chances of employment and their bargaining power within the household.¹⁵ Social protection policies there have been one of the few redistributive measures of the post-apartheid era. Grants in South Africa, 84.6% of which go to women, are distributed to more than half of households countrywide and are the main source of income for 22% of households.¹⁶ In Brazil, similarly, women are key recipients of the *Bolsa Família* (family allowance) grant, and are primary targets for the housing policy *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (my house my life) and the agriculture technical assistance policy through the *Chamada de Ater Mulher* (rural extension services for women). Other countries have policies, such as Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) and Zambia's Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS) and the Food Security Pack programme (FSP),¹⁷ but these are not comprehensive.

Violence against women is a horrifying everyday reality for millions of women worldwide.¹⁸ Globally, one in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lives.¹⁹ Although the developing countries in this study have basic laws and policies to protect against gender-based violence, some governments have been reluctant to step into what is seen as the private or household sphere. For example, three of the countries studied (Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia) have no laws and policies to say that rape in marriage is a crime. In Ghana, marital rape was not criminalised until 2012.²⁰

Quality education is important in terms of women's equality. It can enable people to challenge social norms, prevent household inequalities from being passed on to girls, and it opens up a wide range of opportunities for women and girls. In addition, free childcare is an essential policy to support women to leave the home to access economic opportunities and participate in public life, including organising with others for better policies.²¹ Despite this, only three of the ten countries studied (Brazil, Ghana and South Africa) are providing adequate resources to education and only five (Brazil, Liberia, Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa) are supporting childcare for children under three.



Fourteen kindergarten children at Abuator Primary School in Nigeria study under a mango tree, where they sit on dirty, disused cement sacks on the bare ground. Soldier ants frequently drop from the tree and crawl under the children's clothes, releasing their stinging venom.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

15. Plagerson, S. and Ulriksen, M. S. (2015) *Cash transfer programmes, poverty reduction and empowerment of women in South Africa*, Gender, equality and diversity working paper No. 4/ 2015. Geneva: International Labour Office. Available at: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=53324>.
16. For further information see: ActionAid, 2015. *Young Urban Women; Exploring Choices. Bodily integrity. Economic Security and Equitable Distribution of Unpaid Care work*; and Plagerson, S. and Ulriksen, M. S. (2015) *Cash transfer programmes, poverty reduction and empowerment of women in South Africa*, Gender, equality and diversity working paper No. 4/ 2015. Geneva: International Labour Office. Available at: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=53324>.
17. ILO (2013) 'Social protection: Building social protection floors and comprehensive social security systems, Zambia' [last updated 5 July 2013]. Available at: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowCountryProfile.action?jsessionid=2d1ac45bd9930603733a199f08991c3c02272719fd163acca0d77691bc294360.e3aTbhuLbNmSe34MchaRahaKbNz0?id=238>
18. ActionAid (2015) *Fearless: Standing with women and girls to end violence*, London: ActionAid. Available at: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/fearless-standing_with_women_and_girls_to_end_violence_actionaiduk_1.pdf.
19. UN Women (2015) *Progress of the world's women 2015-2016: transforming economies, realising rights*, New York: United Nations. Pp.50 Available at: http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf.
20. Human Rights Advocacy Centre (2013) 'Marital rape is now a criminal offence in Ghana – Section 42(G) is repealed', 1 August 2012 [updated 28 December 2013]. Available at: <http://www.hracghana.org/index.php/news/hrac-press-releases/item/1025-marital-rape-is-now-a-criminal-offence-in-ghana-section-42-g-is-repealed>.
21. Budlender, D. and Moussié, R. (2013) *Making care visible: women's unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya*, Johannesburg: ActionAid. Pp. 7. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/making_care_visible.pdf.

Women must have equal pay for equal work. Gender inequality in work costs women in poor countries US\$9 trillion each year.²² This huge inequality exists because women get paid less than men – known as the gender pay gap – and do not enjoy the same rates of employment – the gender employment gap.²³ The vast majority of working women in developing countries rely on precarious, underpaid and often unsafe work in the informal sector; the result is that gender inequality in society is reproduced in the workplace.²⁴ On construction projects in Nepal, women will haul the bricks and sand to the men, who build walls with the bricks. The men's work in this scenario is considered more skilled and so the men get paid 300-500 rupees (US\$2.8 – US\$4.7) more per day. In agriculture, women will plant and men will plough. Planting – like brick hauling – is incredibly hard work. However, men are paid 1,000 rupees (US\$9) per day whilst the women are paid only 600-700 rupees (US\$5.6 – US\$6.5).²⁵ In four of the developing countries we studied (Brazil, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia), there is no law which says women should have equal pay for work of equal value.

Minimum wages are an important strategy to respond to inequality in the workplace. They address both the gender pay gap – an inequality between men and women, and also the inequality between

the rich and the poor.²⁶ ActionAid has long argued for a common minimum wage, providing women with enough to live on.²⁷ To protect vulnerable workers, who tend to be women, and their families against poorly paid work, a minimum wage is standard labour practice. One of our ten countries, South Africa, does not provide this across the board, which means that workers there have little leeway to challenge their wages.²⁸

Women contribute significantly to agriculture in developing countries, comprising an average of 43% of the agricultural labour force, and contributing to food security and nutrition.²⁹ Unfortunately, despite their wealth of knowledge and capacity, women farmers are neglected by policy makers and are often not being recognised as “productive” farmers. Their farm work is frequently unpaid or undervalued and they tend to be excluded from decision making. They also do not have equal access to land and other resources, credit, markets, education, extension services and inputs.³⁰ Where there are no laws to make sure women have access to and control over natural resources, women remain reliant on discriminatory patriarchal systems and poorly paid wage labour. This is the case in three of the ten countries studied: Nepal, Uganda and Zambia had no law to say that women could inherit land equally to men.

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22. ActionAid (2015) *Close the gap: the cost of inequality in women's work*, London: ActionAid. Available at: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/womens_rights_on-line_version_2.1.pdf.
23. This calculation is a conservative estimate, as it doesn't include the potential value of women's unpaid care work if it were translated into monetary terms: women workers shoulder considerable responsibility for unpaid care in the home on top of their long hours in paid work. See: Budlender, D. and Moussié, R. (2013) *Making care visible: women's unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya*, Johannesburg: ActionAid. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/making_care_visible.pdf.
24. UN Women (2015) *Progress of the world's women 2015-2016: transforming economies, realising rights*, New York: United Nations. Pp. 195. Available at: http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf.
25. Correspondence between Ruth Kelly, ActionAid's programme policy manager in ActionAid UK and Malati Maskey, ActionAid's women's rights advisor, ActionAid Nepal, August 2016.
26. 'Unlike the minimum wage, the living wage is an informal benchmark, not a legally enforceable minimum level of pay. It is based on the amount an individual needs to earn to cover the basic costs of living for themselves and their family. According to the ILO conventions 95 and 131: "Wages and benefits paid for a standard working week should meet at least legal or industry minimum wage standards and always be sufficient to meet basic needs of workers and their families and to provide discretionary income." The call for living wage has received wide-spread support from civil society organisations, trade unions and some political parties, but limited endorsement by employers'. Here we talk about the minimum wage as the legal document. See: ActionAid (2015) *Close the gap: the cost of inequality in women's work*, London: ActionAid. Available at: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/womens_rights_on-line_version_2.1.pdf; and ActionAid (2010) *Who pays? A living wage for Asian garment workers*, media briefing. London: ActionAid. Available at: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/doc_lib/clothing_media_brief.pdf.
27. Bhattacharjee, A. and Roy, A. et al. (2015) *Towards an Asia floor wage: A global south labour initiative for garment workers in Asia*, Bangalore: Books for Change. Available at: http://www.southsolidarity.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/12/EPUB_Towards-an-Asia-Floor-Wage.pdf.
28. Although there is no mechanism for a national minimum wage in South Africa, the government sets minimum wages in some vulnerable sectors. See: <http://www.mywage.co.za/main/salary/minimum-wages> http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/travmain.sectionReport1?p_lang=en&p_countries=ZA&p_sc_id=1&p_year=2011&p_structure=1.
29. FAO (2011) *The State of Food and Agriculture. Women in Agriculture, Closing the Gap for Gender and Development*. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>.
30. Tripathi, R. and Chung, Y. B. et al. (2012) *What works for women: Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security*. London: ActionAid. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/what_works_for_women_-_final.pdf.



Christine Asukuru, 39 is a widow living in Kumi district eastern Uganda. She describes how her husband's family prevented her from inheriting land she had been farming to support her husband's six children. She says 'after my husband died, the children he had with another woman came and attacked me. They wanted to beat me... and chase me away. They wanted to remove all the land from me, take all the things away from me. When I first came to ActionAid, the most important thing for me was to get the counselling. I needed to know that I was not alone'.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Failure to collect sufficient tax revenues affects women more than men.³¹ In order for taxation to be progressive and not unfairly disadvantage women, the focus should be on direct rather than indirect taxes e.g. income tax.³² Of the ten countries in this study, only in South Africa is the percentage of GDP from direct taxes is greater than the percentage of GDP from indirect taxes. Relying on indirect taxes such as value-added tax or goods and services tax means that the cost tends to fall on women, who are least likely to be able to afford the expense, but who are most likely to be required to pay it, because the responsibility for providing household goods is usually assigned to women.



Faines Kalaba, who is 57 and from Zambia, speaks out about the need for progressive taxation: 'We have a lot of problems which are caused by receiving insufficient funds. I would love to see a school that has enough infrastructure in place for pupils and teachers, as well as having enough teachers and learning and teaching materials'.

PHOTO: JENNIFER HARRISON/ACTIONAID

31. Burrows, B. (2015) 'Why tax is a feminist issue', ActionAid, 8 December 2015. Available at: <http://www.actionaid.org/2015/12/why-tax-feminist-issue>.
 32. Prichard, W., Cobham, A. and Goodall, A. (2014) *The ICTD government revenue dataset, ICTD Working Paper 19*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies. Pp. 38. Available at: http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/10250/ICTD_WP19.pdf?sequence=1.

Policy readiness indicators for SDG5 and SDG10

| Selected targets from SDG#5 and SDG#10 | 10.1 (Income inequality) By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average. | | 10.2 (Inclusion) By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. | | 10.4 (Social protection) Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality. | | 5.1 (Discrimination) End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. | | 5.2 (VAWG) Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. | | 5.4 (Unpaid care work) Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate. | | 5.a (Access to economic resources) Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws. | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| | Does the country have a tax expenditure survey? ³³ | Are direct taxes higher as a % of GDP than indirect taxes? ³⁴ | Is non discrimination (based on age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status) part of the constitution and within a consistent policy response? ³⁵ | Is there a minimum wage? ³⁶ | Is there effective social protection legislation? ³⁷ | Does the country have equal pay legislation (equal pay for equal value)? ³⁸ | Does the country have legislation outlawing rape in marriage? ³⁹ | Does the country have domestic violence legislation? ⁴⁰ | Is % GDP spent on education in line with global targets? ⁴¹ | Is there a budget line for funding pre-school childcare? ⁴² | Does the country have legislation giving women equal inheritance rights? ⁴³ | | | |
| 1. Brazil | Y | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Green | |
| 2. Ghana | Y | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Green | |
| 3. Haiti | N | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | N | N | Y | Y | Amber | |
| 4. Liberia | N | N | N | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Amber | |
| 5. Nepal | N | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | N | N | N | N | Red | |
| 6. Nigeria | N | N | Y | Y | N | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Red | |
| 7. Senegal | N | N | N | Y | N | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Red | |
| 8. South Africa | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Green | |
| 9. Uganda | N | N | Y | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N | N | N | N | Red | |
| 10. Zambia | Y | N | Y | Y | N | N | Y | Y | N | N | N | N | Red | |

33. International Budget Partnership: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/open-budget-initiative/open-budget-survey/country-info/>.

34. International Centre for Tax and Development: <http://www.ictd.ac/datasets/the-ictd-government-revenue-dataset>.

35. See constitutions for each country.

36. ILO Conditions of Work and Employment Programme: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/travmain.byCountry2>

37. ILO (2014) *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgrports/-/dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_245201.pdf.

38. World Bank (2016) *Women, Business and the Law: Getting Equal*. Available at: <http://wbi.worldbank.org/-/media/WBG/WBL/Documents/Reports/2016/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2016.pdf>.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. UNESCO databases: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/?queryid=181>.

42. For Africa: UNESCO (2010). *Early Childhood Care and Education Regional Report. Africa*. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001894/189420E.pdf>. For Asia: UNESCO (2010). *Early Childhood Care and Education Regional Report. Asia and the Pacific* https://www.unesco.de/fileadmin/medien/Dokumente/Bildung/WCECE_Regional_Report_Asia_and_the_Pacific.pdf.

43. World Bank (2016). *Women, Business and the Law: Getting Equal*. Available at: <http://wbi.worldbank.org/-/media/WBG/WBL/Documents/Reports/2016/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2016.pdf>.

Developed countries

The SDGs are intended to be universal, meaning that all countries should achieve all the goals. However, acknowledging that developed countries' policies have an impact on developing countries, and that they have a responsibility under SDG 17,⁴⁴ this report looks at government readiness in Australia, Denmark, UK and the US, using a composite indicator incorporating trade, aid, tax, funding for women's rights organisations, and business ethics. The resulting analysis showed that richer countries are failing to play a positive role in reducing global inequalities as outlined in SDG 17. Achieving the SDGs will require substantial finance from sources other than aid, but developing countries, and in particular least developed countries, will be dependent on aid to make progress.

The UN 2030 Agenda review report praises the preliminary indications that overall net official development assistance (ODA) to the least developed countries would increase by 4% in real terms in 2015.⁴⁵ However, in the US, the world's largest economy, the ODA total, 0.33% of GNP, is far below the global standard of 0.7%; the US also under-delivers on promised aid.⁴⁶ On trade, the review report is again positive, stating that, "Preferential treatment for developing countries and the least developed countries in trade can help reduce inequalities by creating more export opportunities."⁴⁷ But this strategy also has a

possible side-effect of keeping countries locked in low-value-added industries, which generate few decent jobs and poor wages. For example, ActionAid calculated that a single fashion designer in the US paid US\$6,133 a month on average earns more than the combined monthly wages of 27 garment workers in Asia.⁴⁸ The US and Australia have both thus far failed to endorse the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights,⁴⁹ and are not meeting their state duty to ensure that companies effectively prevent and deal with the possible negative effects businesses may have on human rights in developing countries and elsewhere.⁵⁰ Box 2 shows how a variety of US policies have negative impact on Guatemala.



Dung lives with her husband, daughter and baby son in Uong Bi, Vietnam. She has high hopes for her children. Rather than working in the shoe industry and mining sector, like their parents and grandparents before them, where low wages and lack of social protection make life very difficult, Dung hopes that they will have the opportunity to study and to get good jobs in medicine and engineering.

PHOTO: RUTH KELLY/ACTIONAID

44. SDG 17 is to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
45. Compared to 2014 figures. Hongbo, W. (2016) 'Report of the Secretary General Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals High Level Political Forum "Session 1: Where do we stand at year one?" 11 July 2016, New York: United Nations. Available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2016/75&Lang=E.
46. Center for Global Development Commitment to Development Index. Available at: <http://www.cgdev.org/cdi-2015>. See also: http://www.cgdev.org/files/1424481_file_CGDQuODApublish_final3.pdf and http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/QUODA_final_revised_september.pdf
47. Hongbo, W. (2016) 'Report of the Secretary General Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals High Level Political Forum "Session 1: Where do we stand at year one?" 11 July 2016, New York: United Nations. Available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2016/75&Lang=E.
48. Kelly, R. (2016) *What a way to make a living: Using industrial policy to create more and better*, London: ActionAid. Available at: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/what_a_way_to_make_a_living_pdf.pdf.
49. Both Australia and the US have signed up to the OECD guidelines on multinational corporations. See: OECD (2016) 'Responsible business conduct, OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises'. Available at: <http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/ncps/australia.htm>.
50. See: United Nations Economic and Social Council (2016) *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals*, Report of the Secretary-General, 24-27 July 2016. Available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2016/75&Lang=E; and Birdsall, N. and Kharas, H. et al. (2010) *Quality of official development assistance assessment*, Washington DC: Centre for Global Development. Available at: http://www.cgdev.org/files/1424481_file_CGDQuODApublish_final3.pdf.

BOX 2: US policy, inequality and land in Guatemala

US policy has strongly influenced the growth of inequality in Guatemala. Guatemala has the largest economy in Central America, with a GDP growth rate of 3% in 2012, and nearly 4% in 2015, yet poverty grew from 51% in 2006 to 59% in 2014.⁵¹ Indigenous people have much higher poverty rates than non-indigenous Guatemalans. Inequality in political power is stark, with only 15 indigenous people among the current 158 members of parliament.

The US government's influence over the Guatemalan government and its policies peaked during a violent coup that the US sponsored in 1954 to stop a land reform that might have affected US-owned banana plantations. However, in recent years, US government experts acknowledge that unequal distribution of land is a root cause of violence and underdevelopment.⁵²

During the Guatemalan civil war, USAID attempted to implement market-driven land reforms by funding programmes for poor families to borrow money to buy land. Not only were these reforms poorly run, with few families able to obtain land, and fewer still able to escape debt, but the US overtly and covertly supported the Guatemalan military which carried out genocidal tactics against indigenous Mayan communities in which 200,000 people were killed and 1.5 million displaced.⁵³

The US government played an important role in supporting the 1996 Peace Accords which promised inclusion of indigenous peoples, land redistribution and rural development. But projects co-designed by the World Bank made the situation worse; insufficient land rights protections meant that impoverished male farmers sold their land under pressure from buyers or to address economic distress, often without taking into account the decision making rights of their women partners. A study of six municipalities in the northern lowlands found that dozens of rural communities had been gobbled up by palm oil plantations and reduced to the core housing areas, and that four communities had disappeared completely.⁵⁴

The UK government played an important role in shaping the new SDG framework and there has been strong commitment to development from the highest levels of government. The UK has not only

met but also enshrined in law the commitment to 0.7% of national income as aid. There has also been a strong focus on women's rights in UK aid programming,⁵⁵ which adds value.⁵⁶

51. The World Bank Group (2016) 'Guatemala overview'. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/guatemala/overview>.

52. USAID (2016) 'USAID country profile: Property rights and resource governance, Guatemala' Available at: http://www.usaidlandtenure.net/sites/default/files/country-profiles/full-reports/USAID_Land_Tenure_Guatemala_Profile_0.pdf.

53. *Holocaust Museum Houston*. N.p., n.d. Web. 2 May 2013. https://www.hmh.org/la_Genocide_Guatemala.shtml.

54. Alonso-Fradejas, A. (2012) 'Land control-grabbing in Guatemala: the political economy of contemporary agrarian change', *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/ Revue canadienne d'études du développement*, vol. 33, issue 4, pp. 509-528.

55. Birdsall, N. and Kharas, H. et al. (2010) *Quality of official development assistance assessment*, Washington DC: Centre for Global Development. Available at: http://www.cgdev.org/files/1424481_file_CGDQuODAprepub_final3.pdf. See also: OECD (2016) *Aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment, donor charts*. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Aid-in-support-of-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment.pdf>.

56. Strong evidence shows that women's rights organisations and movements are the most effective means of achieving progressive policy change. A study of 70 countries across four decades found that women's collective action has been instrumental in securing legal reforms to end violence against women, prohibit discrimination in the workplace and to introduce childcare services, to name but a few. See: M. Htun and S. L. Weldon (2012) 'The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975-2005' in *American Political Science Review*, vol. 106, no.3, August 2012. Pp. 548-569. Available at: http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FPSR%2FPSR106_03%2F0003055412000226a.pdf&code=77425b326d08b1fb5eecd461067b11c3; and UN Women (2015) *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming economies, realising rights*. Pp. 117. Available at: http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf.

While aid is a vital source of finance for the SDGs, domestic tax revenue is at least as important – if not more so. Tax is a sustainable, long-term source of funding for essential public services like health, education, water and sanitation; where these are inadequate it is usually women who fill

the gap with unpaid care work, worsening gender inequality. Yet developing countries lose billions of dollars every year to corporate tax avoidance. Rich country policies are important in the international landscape of corporate taxation, and it is in this regard that the UK's record is more mixed (see Box 3).

BOX 3: The impact of UK tax policies on developing countries

The UK did much to put tax reform on the global agenda at its 2013 G8 summit at Lough Erne. The government has also created a public register of the ownership of UK companies, which deters some types of tax dodging, and it has stated support for public corporate country-by-country reporting – both of which are useful advances in tax transparency.

However, the UK's own anti-tax haven rules are weak, creating an incentive for companies to shift profits out of developing countries into tax havens. Many tax treaties between developing countries and the UK – some dating back to colonial times – need to be reviewed and updated to bring them into line with development objectives. The UK's own tax policies, including cuts to the rate of corporation tax and tax breaks on profits from patented inventions, have in some respects contributed to a “race to the bottom” on corporate tax, which negatively affects developing countries' ability to gather a fair share of tax from corporations.

London's iconic Trafalgar Square was transformed into an interactive, tropical tax haven in 2016 by Oxfam, ActionAid and Christian Aid to increase pressure on David Cameron and world leaders to agree plans to clamp down on tax dodging at an international anti-corruption summit.

PHOTO: ANDY HALL/OXFAM



Denmark has a new aid strategy with the specific aim of implementing the SDGs, and it continues to fight for sexual and reproductive rights of women globally. However, in late 2015-16, a drastic reduction in Danish development aid from a projected 0.85% to 0.71% of national income, will jeopardise aid

capacity, slashing Denmark's long-term aid commitments by 42% in just 15 months.⁵⁷ At the same time, there is little appetite to fundamentally reform tax and trade policies to help poorer countries implement the SDGs.

57. Timbuktu (2016) 'Velkommen til Timbuktu Fondens prisuddeling 2016'. Available at: <http://www.timbuktu fonden.dk/>. See also: OECD (2016) 'Denmark is a top aid donor but reduced budget and refugee costs pose risks'. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/development/denmark-is-a-top-aid-donor-but-reduced-budget-and-refugee-costs-pose-risks.htm>.

For years, Denmark was a leading force on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and was quick to endorse it and to present a national action plan. However, an updated national action plan is now overdue, and Denmark could do much more to protect against human rights abuses by companies. A number of recent

initiatives have increased transparency around corporate taxation, yet tax policies and legislation remain blind to potential negative effects on poorer countries, despite Denmark having its own plan for development policy coherence. Recent double-taxation treaties take away more taxing rights than previous treaties (See Box 4).

BOX 4: Danish tax treaty limits Ghana's ability to raise revenue

In June 2014, Denmark pledged to strengthen developing countries' ability to finance their own development through tax revenues as part of its Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) efforts, where EU states work to ensure their domestic and other international policies do not undermine their development policies. However, just three months before this statement, Denmark signed a tax treaty with Ghana which shrinks Ghana's ability to tax Danish multinational companies in a number of areas.

Tax treaties override national laws. The 2014 Denmark-Ghana tax treaty prevents the government of Ghana from collecting tax on profits Danish companies make in Ghana, effectively shifting the right to tax these profits from Ghana to Denmark. For example, when Danish companies sell shares related to any movable property, Ghana is prevented from taxing the proceeds. This deprives the people of Ghana of the capital gains tax they should receive when businesses in hugely lucrative sectors like IT or consumer goods make big profits from the sale of shares.

Finally, the treaty overrides the Ghanaian law that determines tax thresholds for Danish companies. Ghana's tax base is reduced as Danish companies pay less in Ghana. However, in some instances these companies are not paying tax in Denmark either. Neither Ghanaian nor Danish people benefit from this: the only winners will be multinational companies.

There is a real risk that the 2014 Denmark-Ghana tax treaty will mean Ghana collects less revenue, which could otherwise be spent on financing the massive investments required to secure women's rights and reduce inequality.

Whilst SDG 17 does not look at climate change per se, addressing the impacts of climate change is an inescapable component of any 'global partnership'. Climate change is unequally impacting on countries and people. Women in poorer countries are experiencing significant challenges, not only because developing countries are less well prepared but

also because tropical areas will experience a more severe impact.⁵⁸ Richer countries' high historical and continued emissions, and their failure to do more to support developing countries to adapt to climate impacts, despite their capacity to do so (see Box 5), contributes to greater inequalities between countries.⁵⁹

58. See: Singh, H. (2015) 'A Paris climate deal must address global inequality', Climate Home, 24 November 2015. Available at: <http://www.climatechangenews.com/2015/11/24/a-paris-climate-deal-must-address-global-inequality/>.

59. See: Singh, H. (2015) 'Solving the climate crisis means tackling global inequality', *Thomas Reuters Foundation*, 26 May 2015. Available at: <http://news.trust.org/item/20150525141853-ld051/>.

BOX 5: Climate fair shares

ActionAid looked at the “fair shares” that richer countries should contribute to restoring climate balance. We found that financial commitments to date made by rich countries fall far short of these fair shares, with serious implications for vulnerable countries. Richer countries need to massively scale up their financial commitments. For example, the USA must increase its recent adaptation finance provision more than 60 times by 2020 and by 154 times by 2025,⁶⁰ in order to meet the required funding level of \$150bn by 2025.⁶¹

BOX 6: Australia - inequality in high income countries

People can experience multiple and overlapping inequalities, regardless of where they live. Australia ranked second in the 2015 UN Human Development Index⁶² and has legislative protection against gender discrimination⁶³ so it seems realistic that it should be able to achieve SDG 5 and SDG 10. Yet inequality is growing. Women, especially those who are further affected by discrimination because of race, age, disability and poverty, face worsening inequality.

The wealth of the top 20% of Australians is 70 times more than the wealth of the bottom 20%,⁶⁴ and approximately 1.2 million people, mainly women, are food insecure.⁶⁵ The gender pay gap has increased since 2004; women are paid 17.3% less than men.⁶⁶ This pay disparity, coupled with the unpaid care work that women manage, leads to women having less than half the retirement income of men, whilst living longer. This means that some older women experience extreme hardship, including increased rates of homelessness.⁶⁷

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)⁶⁸ women have shockingly different health outcomes: for example, an almost a ten year life expectancy deficit, at 73.7 years, compared with 83.1 years for non-indigenous women;⁶⁹ Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised and five times more likely to be victims of homicide.⁷⁰ They are more likely to seek safe

60. ActionAid (2015) *Mind the Adaptation Gap: Why rich countries must deliver their fair shares of adaptation finance in the new global climate deal*. Available at: <http://www.actionaid.org/publications/mind-adaptation-gap>. Support from richer countries to developing countries should go further than financing, which is mentioned here as it is the easiest to measure. For more information about Fair Shares, see: Civil Society Review (2015) *Fair Shares: A civil society equity review of INDCs*. Available at: www.civilsocietyreview.org.
61. UNEP (2014) *Adaptation Gap Report*. Available at: <http://web.unep.org/adaptationgapreport/content/adaptation-gap-reports>.
62. UNDP (2016) 'Human development index'. Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>.
63. For example, Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2012C00899>; and the Fair Work Act 2009 on equitable labour standards across genders, available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2009A00028>.
64. Australian Council of Social Service (2015) *Inequality in Australia: a nation divided*. Strawberry Hills: ACOSS. Pp. 10. Available at: http://www.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Inequality_in_Australia_FINAL.pdf.
65. Mann, A. (2016) 'The right to food – and how 1.2 million Australians miss out', *The University of Sydney*, 11 April 2016. Available at: <http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2016/04/11/the-right-to-food---and-how-1-2-million-australians-miss-out.html>.
66. Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2016) *Gender pay gap statistics*, Australian Government. Available at: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Gender_Pay_Gap_Factsheet.pdf.
67. This is referring to the retirement scheme of superannuation in Australia of which the government subsidies through tax benefits. See: Australian Securities and Investments Commission (2016) 'Superannuation and women'. Available at: <https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/life-events-and-you/women/superannuation-and-women>. Men have a life expectancy of 80.3 and women 84.4 in 2014. See: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) 'Life expectancy and deaths hit historic high', 12 November 2015. Available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats%5Cabs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/F95E5F868D7CCA48CA25750B0016B8D8?Opendocument>.
68. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women refers to Australia's first or indigenous peoples.
69. Holland, C. (2016) *Progress and priorities report 2016*, San Francisco: Close the Gap Campaign. Pp. 10. Available at: https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/Progress_priorities_report_CTG_2016_0.pdf.
70. See: National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance Submission to the Human Rights Commission on the Examination of children affected by family and domestic violence, June 2015, Pp. 2. Available at: http://natsiwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Submission-NATSIWA_Examination-of-children-affected-by-family-and-DV-2015-June-Final-1.pdf.

accommodation to escape domestic violence,⁷¹ and are also overrepresented in the prison system as they make up only 2% of the Australian female population but one-third of the prison population.⁷²

At the same time, there are a disproportionate number of men in power in Australia: only 34% of parliamentarians and 24% of the current government are women.⁷³ The gross inequality between men and women within Australia is reflected in its ODA. While the government's ODA policy aims to have 80% of funding go towards effectively addressing gender equality and women's empowerment,⁷⁴ in reality only 54% of Australia's ODA was spent with a gender-targeted objective and the qualitative gender analysis of this spending remains unclear.⁷⁵

71. Ibid.

72. Prisoners in Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2013. Cat. 4517.0 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4517.0~2013~Main%20Features~Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20prisoner%20characteristics~6>.

73. See: http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members.

74. Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2016) 'Australia's assistance for gender equality'. Available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/investment-priorities/gender-equality-empowering-women-girls/gender-equality/Pages/australias-assistance-for-gender-equality.aspx>.

75. See: Australian Government (2016) *Performance of Australian Aid 2014-2015*, Barton: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Pp. 74. Available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/performance-of-australian-aid-2014-15.pdf>.

2. Still waiting: Women will be especially burdened if inequality is not reduced

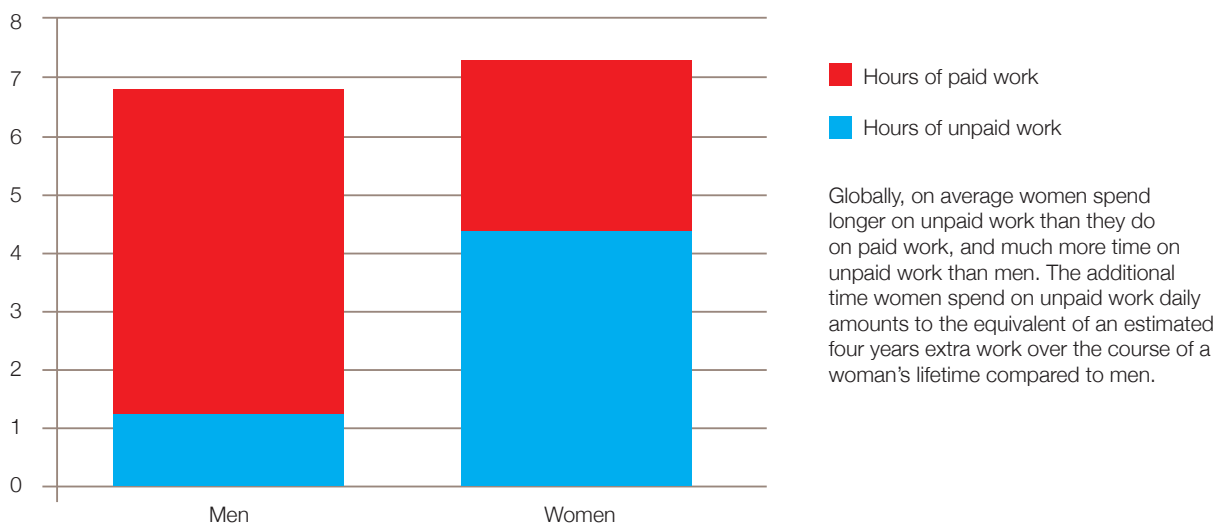
At every level, women are discriminated against.⁷⁶ Inequalities overlap across women’s lives, negatively affecting their mobility, levels of unpaid care work, education and economic opportunities.

Women will continue to experience inequalities unless their vastly disproportionate levels of unpaid care work are recognised, reduced and redistributed. ActionAid analysed women’s total unpaid hours of work compared to men’s, and found that globally, on average women’s additional hours of unpaid work over their lifetime came to an estimated 23 working years, based on a man’s average working day of 6.79 hours.⁷⁷ This means that when we take into account men’s and women’s paid and unpaid work together, a woman entering employment today undertakes an additional four years’ worth of work during her lives, over and above those of

men.⁷⁸ This is equivalent to an extra one month’s work for every woman, every year of her life.⁷⁹

Most men and women combine paid and unpaid work during their lives. When they finish their paid working day running businesses, working for their employers, doing agricultural labour or selling fish at local markets, they return to their homes and do chores, look after families, and much more. However, discriminatory social norms mean that it is men who are much more likely to be mostly engaged in paid work, while women do more - a lot more - of the unpaid work, mainly in the form of caring for families and homes. The difference in hours given over to paid and unpaid work on a daily basis can be seen in figure 1.

Figure 1: Differences in time spent daily on paid and unpaid work by women and men (global average)



76. The World Bank Group (2014) 'Report stresses need for bold moves toward gender equality at work', press release 20 February 2014. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/02/20/report-stresses-need-for-bold-moves-toward-gender-equality-at-work>.
 77. This figure looks at total additional hours that women work compared to men on average globally, taking account of both paid and unpaid work. Unpaid work includes unpaid care but also additional activities, such as working in family enterprises and volunteering. Analysis undertaken by Economists Without Borders for ActionAid UK. See section 2 of Annex (Pp.31) for basic methodology and key caveats. More details available at: www.actionaid.org/inequality.
 78. Ibid.
 79. Ibid.

Taking care of your family and running your home takes a lot of time and energy, even when you've got a good support system around you, but when you live in poverty, this is particularly burdensome, due to limited public service provision and an inability to afford labour-saving devices. Tasks such as fetching water and firewood, cooking on open fires, and caring for children, sick and elderly people with little support from the state, condemns many women to a life of back-breaking drudgery. Women's unpaid care burden also limits their time to pursue income generating opportunities, to have their voices heard in decision-making and political activities, as well as for rest and leisure. Government policy can play a vital role in both reducing the burden of unpaid care for women, by ensuring the provision of good quality accessible public services, and in tackling the barriers to women entering and benefiting from decent employment, through equal opportunities and minimum wage legislation.⁸⁰

In paid work, due to the gender pay gap, men and women do not receive equal incomes. Although there is a minimum wage in nine out of ten developing countries studied, this does not apply to the informal sector – where in sub-Saharan Africa 75% of all jobs for women are⁸¹ – giving them little access to social protection and labour rights. This reduces the potential for women to become economically empowered.

Even where policies are in place to protect women, “policies run ahead of social norms”.⁸² Therefore in a situation where there is existing inequality, policies may take time to embed. For example, women who grew up being told they were a burden may not have the confidence to access or use existing policies to their advantage. In Zambia, there is a Gender Based Violence Act but the consequences of raising a legal complaint, such as humiliation from authorities, outweigh the benefits. Many women are afraid to come forward, a response common in a culture where men and women are expected to behave in certain ways. This is worsened by the presence of customary laws that run alongside statute laws. In Ghana, customary laws deprive women of land rights despite these being protected within the Intestate Succession Law (PNDC Law 111), Chapter 5 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, and within the pending Spousal Rights and Property Bill and Land Bill.⁸³

While many factors contribute to each situation, the absence of government recognition of gender inequality means women become increasingly invisible – stuck in precarious and poorly paid work and in unpaid care work. There is no opportunity or spare time for women to organise, join unions, or use other ways to speak out about the inequalities facing them; thus policies are likely to become increasingly disconnected from the reality women face.

BOX 7: Despite the challenges facing them, women are acting

Women experience discrimination in multiple ways. In some areas of Nepal, women are restricted from leaving their house and surrounding area due to the volume of unpaid care work. In the far east of Nepal, women and girls are not allowed to be inside the home during menstruation, nor can they go to the temple or to schools. They must instead stay in cow sheds, with the animals, manure, snakes, mosquitos and other insects.

80. ActionAid (2013) *Making Care Visible: Women's unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya*. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/making_care_visible.pdf

81. See <http://wiego.org/informal-economy/statistical-picture> for other statistics.

82. Emily Craven, ActionAid South Africa, correspondence with author 4th August 2016.

83. Ameyibor, F. (2014) 'Ghana criminalises marital rape gender minister', *Ghana News Agency*, 24 October 2014. Available at: <http://www.ghananewsagency.org/social/ghana-criminalises-marital-rape-gender-minister-81338>.

Despite all of the challenges that women face, particularly in reducing their unpaid care work, many women are still organising and participating in acts of resistance. ActionAid's *Shifting Power* report (forthcoming) will present research from seven countries (Nepal, Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Haiti and Brazil) to describe the energetic, community-based discussions in which women express their perceptions of inequality and the methods they use to overcome inequalities they face.⁸⁴

In Nepal, women have been using time-use diaries to record their unpaid care work and paid work activities. This tool provides the basis for discussions between women and their husbands and children. For example, in one village in Nepal, women using time-use diaries organised a campaign ("Burn your curry") based on the tool. Women participating in this campaign explained that, "it is very difficult to make our husbands understand how much we contribute; it's taken for granted, we're not appreciated. So when cooking, we pretended we had to go and do something else, and asked for help from our husband/ brother/father. If they cook[ed] nicely, [it was because] they [had taken] part [in unpaid care work]; if they burned it, we would say that they ruined it because they didn't take much interest."⁸⁵



Sandhya Limbu is 31, and is married with three daughters. She lives in Nepal. She goes to a local REFLECT circle. Sandhya's husband helps her with cooking, looking after the children, washing clothes, and fetching firewood and water. She believes that the family is key to recognizing, reducing and redistributing unbalanced work at home.

PHOTO: NAYANTARA GURUNG KAKSHAPATI/ACTIONAID

84. ActionAid's first inequality report, *The Price of Privilege* was launched in April. The third report, provisionally called '*Grounding inequality, shifting power*' will be launched at the end of 2016.

85. Nesbitt-Ahmed, Z. and Chopra, D. (2014) *Unpaid care work programme: Nepal Progress Report (2012-13)*, Evidence Report No 54. p. 14. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies. Available at: <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/3527/ER54.pdf;jsessionid=960438BC51B949651CE07FFE8931E1F7?sequence=1>.

3. Policy readiness

The importance of policy readiness

Policy readiness is about whether a country is ready to start making progress to achieve a goal. The first step is to ensure that the appropriate policies are in place and any legal barriers are cleared. Other elements that show policy readiness for the SDGs include:

- Laws & regulations (policies) that support the aims of the SDGs
- Laws & regulation (policies) that do not block the aims of the SDGs
- Ways of measuring levels of inequality – to allow progress to be assessed
- Presence of women decision makers in the design and monitoring of policies

- An open space for civil society to play a role in the design and monitoring of policies
- Political will to transform governance and power at the national level
- The presence of gender-responsive public services to ensure that policies can be effective
- Sufficient budget commitments

Of course, even if a policy or law is in place and these criteria of readiness have been met, this does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented effectively. However, it is a crucial first step. The boxes in this section explore some of the ways that policy readiness connects to ongoing efforts to address inequality.

BOX 8: Nepal - a creative constitution

ActionAid works to support women to hold the Nepal government accountable to its progressive constitution. The constitution highlights food sovereignty, good governance, and quality education. It even signals the importance of taking women's unpaid care work into account. The constitution is a key tool in women's efforts to get the government to act to reduce and redistribute their unpaid care work. In support of this, ActionAid's work with time-use diaries helps women to visualise how they divide their day and enables them to present the evidence as a tool for negotiating for change. While these popular tools were initially designed for women's groups, potentially to facilitate discussions between husband and wife, they are now used within whole families; they are also used by women to show local leaders that there is still a huge discrepancy between the work that men do and the work that women do.

BOX 9: Senegal - civil society can use existing policies as leverage for better coverage

When there is a policy in place, civil society can use it to hold governments accountable for its application across different geographic areas. ActionAid is supporting women to come together to jointly take action against poor distribution of resources in Niodior, an island off the coast of Senegal, which has unequal access to economic resources and to basic services compared to the mainland. Article 8 of the constitution guarantees health, yet only 5% of people in Niodior can access health insurance (compared to 20% countrywide).⁸⁶

86. For Senegal's strategic development plan of universal health coverage for 2013-2017, see: World Health Organisation (2012) National Strategy for Economic and Social Development 2013-2017. Available at: <https://www.mindbank.info/item/2388>.

There are only three health centres on the island, with no specialist doctor for women or the elderly, many of whom have high blood pressure and heart problems because sea salt seeps into drinking water and agricultural products.⁸⁷ There is a shortage of teachers and learning materials, and thus poor learning outcomes – most children drop out of school before they complete the basic cycle, as there is no secondary school on Niodior.⁸⁸ Lack of education and economic opportunities drives illegal migration, as young people feel this is the best way to support their parents.⁸⁹

“I am a victim of this lack of infrastructure. I abandoned my schooling 13 years ago, and this still makes me sad. I plan to go to Spain in a traditional boat. I know it’s risky but I don’t have an alternative. Many young people have left the area. Even young women - who go to the city to work as house girls.” – Bacari Sarr, a young fisherman from the village of Felir, Niodior.

ActionAid is able to bring knowledge and information from the national level to the women’s groups on Niodior, where women can use their local knowledge to plan how to challenge government policy. One piece of knowledge ActionAid has highlighted recently is the government’s plan to develop a new city 50km from Dakar. In contrast to underfunded Niodior, this city - named Diamniadio - is due to receive US\$100 million from the African Development Bank.⁹⁰ Ironically, Diamniadio is the name of another island near Niodior with very little infrastructure or economic opportunity.⁹¹ This knowledge acts as a tool for women’s groups to then demand for better services themselves, as they can ask why they do not experience the same levels of support and investment. Amongst other changes, ActionAid Senegal reports that the health insurance plan implemented by the ministry of health and social protection has now started to target children and elderly people in the area as a result of community organizing, and also has started identify places to drill for drinking water on Niodior.

Fatou Sarr is 45 years old

and has 5 children and lives on Diamniadio island, Senegal. Her husband is a fisherman. She is struggling to feed her family as salt water is damaging the fertility of the soil. “Poverty is affecting the children’s health and education, but we are doing our best to keep the children in school”. Diamniadio Island is experiencing severe climate impacts. Rice cultivation has declined, fishing and shell-fish collection are in decline.

PHOTO: CLÉMENT TARDIF/ACTIONAID



87. ActionAid Senegal (2005) *Niodior DA Proposal Document*. [internal]
 88. ActionAid Senegal (2008) *National Consultation Document*. [internal]
 89. Interview between ActionAid Senegal staff and Mr Badara Diome, the mayor of Djirnda.
 90. Monnier, O. and Baker, C. (2015) ‘Here comes Senegal’s new city – president Macky Sall’s biggest mega project yet attracts ‘hundreds of bids’, Mail and Guardian Africa, 16 September 2015. Available at: <http://mgafrica.com/article/2015-09-16-here-comes-senegals-new-city-president-macky-salls-biggest-mega-project-yet-attracts-hundreds-of-bids>
 91. ActionAid (2016) ‘Niodior’. Available at: <http://www.peuples-solidaires.org/en/senegal/where-we-work/niodior>

Where there is no political space for civil society and the public to act, it is challenging to design and implement inequality-reducing policies. This is the case for Brazil at the moment (see Box 10), where civil society is concerned that the current government, established as a result of a contentious process of impeachment in April 2016, will continue to cut budgets in education, health, social protection, family farming and other areas. In

Uganda and South Africa, there is concern spurred by government crackdowns on civil society activities.⁹² Similarly, where there is or has been conflict or disaster, opportunities for progressive policy making are severely limited, such as in areas of Nigeria and in Nepal. Where there is space for civil society, such as in Senegal (see Box 10), the process is much smoother.

BOX 10: Relations between civil society and government affect policy

The recent impeachment of the Brazilian President weakened the voice of civil society by giving more power and influence to conservative parties and sectors than progressive ones. The term “BBB Benches” (bible, beef and bullet benches) refers to the strong representation in parliament of evangelical churches, cattle/agribusiness and ex-military leaders. Their policies are likely to negatively affect socially vulnerable groups, and are expected to have a disastrous impact on women, particularly minority women. Brazil’s civil society has also been damaged by violence – 49 environmental activists were killed there in 2015 (45 of them in the Amazon) – and by a potential new law against terrorism, which has been criticised by the UN for going too far and restricting civil society space.⁹³

Where there is a positive relationship between civil society and governments, policy change can happen more quickly. For example, Zakaria Sambakhe of ActionAid says of the current context in Senegal “The policy space is there for civil society and decision makers to dialogue....it’s really an opportunity.”⁹⁴ 2012 was a crossroads in the political evolution of Senegal. A new president was elected along with a new national parliament which included a diversity of political parties and representatives of citizens’ movements. The president accepted 14 progressive constitutional changes including strengthening the rights of the political opposition.⁹⁵ Box 9 shows some of the issues that civil society is seeking to improve by working with the government in Senegal.

BOX 11: South Africa - where a strong policy is used by authorities to deflect criticism

When a policy is in place, it can allow civil society to push for implementation. This can be challenging when authorities hide behind the existence of a strong policy. For example, in South Africa, persistent attempts to hold the government to account for escalating violence against black lesbian women were deflected by references to the country having the most progressive legislation on the continent around LGBTI rights.⁹⁶ There is however, a huge gap between policy and the actual experience of many people, particularly the poorest people. South Africa is suffering from extreme levels of sexual violence. A 2014

92. CIVICUS (2016) *State of civil society report 2016*, London: CIVICUS. Available at: <http://civicus.org/images/documents/SOCS2016/summaries/SoCS-full-review.pdf>.

93. Ibid.

94. Zakaria Sambakhe, ActionAid Senegal in correspondence with Kate Carroll, Research Coordinator, ActionAid International. July 2016

95. Pham, J.P. (2016) ‘Senegal consolidates its constitutional democracy’, *Newsweek*, 4 April 2016. <http://europe.newsweek.com/senegal-consolidates-its-constitutional-democracy-443849?rm=eu>

96. See: Outright Action International (1996) ‘South Africa: new constitution protects gays and lesbians’, published 1 May 1996. Available at: <https://www.outrightinternational.org/content/south-africa-new-constitution-protects-gays-and-lesbians>.

survey showed that 52% of women in Gauteng, the most populated province in South Africa, had experienced sexual violence.⁹⁷ A different report suggests that only one in nine women will ever report a rape in South Africa.⁹⁸ Levels of domestic violence are also extremely high and acts are rarely reported. Once a policy is in place, the hard work is not over. Civil society must always have its eyes on effective implementation so that there is real change in people's lives. ActionAid South Africa is using policies as a hook to lobby governments to improve justice for, and perceptions to LGBT people.⁹⁹

Effective government structures and a fair economic system can make a difference to inequality outcomes.¹⁰⁰ Conversely, as *The Price of Privilege* outlines, even where efforts are made to redistribute resources fairly", opportunities for change will be limited if the drivers of global and national inequality are not addressed.¹⁰¹ Policy readiness requires a governance structure that enables policies to be adopted, implemented and measured within a context of democracy and power sharing. The type of economic system is also critically important.

Some economic approaches will only serve to increase existing inequalities through concentration of wealth, tax evasion, or off-shoring of profits. Growth in and of itself will not necessarily reduce poverty or inequality. This has been proven in many regions.¹⁰² For example, in Nigeria, GDP growth has been at 5% over the past 20 years, yet poverty has increased significantly during that time (see Box 12). In such cases, the adoption of any inequality-reducing measures are undermined by fiscal and economic policies.

BOX 12: Nigeria - an economic system designed to exacerbate inequalities.

In Nigeria, GDP growth has been at 5% over the past 20 years. This is higher than the average African or global growth rates. Despite this, poverty has also increased from 54% in 2003 to just under 70% in 2012. This means that 112 million people out of a population of 170 million people are living in poverty.¹⁰³ According to the 2012 National Youth Survey report, 45% of young people between 15 and 35 are unemployed, and four in every five graduates have no job.¹⁰⁴ In Nigeria, the richest 10% earn more than twice as much as the poorest 40%.¹⁰⁵ Nigeria's growth did not reduce inequality, and neither did negative growth. Following the 2014 crude oil price crash, Nigeria entered negative growth, with GDP growth contracting by more than 3.4% in 2016.¹⁰⁶

97. Gender links for equality and justice (2015) 'The war@home: Findings of the GBV prevalence study in South Africa', 3 November 2015. Available here: <http://genderlinks.org.za/programme-web-menu/publications/the-warhome-findings-of-the-gbv-prevalence-study-in-south-africa-2012-11-25/>
98. The One in Nine Campaign, a national sexual violence advocacy campaign, takes its name from a 2002 report from the Medical Research Council indicating that only one in every nine women who are raped reports the rape. See: One In Nine Campaign. About Us. <http://www.oneinnine.org.za/22.page>.
99. Sengwayo, A. M. (2015) 'Why I'm fighting for LGBTI women's rights in South Africa' *ActionAid blog*, 14 October 2015. Available at: <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/blog/campaigns/2015/10/14/why-im-fighting-for-lgbti-womens-rights-in-south-africa>. ActionAid (2016) *The price of privilege: extreme wealth, unaccountable power, and the fight for equality*, Johannesburg: ActionAid. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_price_of_privilege_lr.pdf.
100. ActionAid (2016) *The price of privilege: extreme wealth, unaccountable power, and the fight for equality*, Johannesburg: ActionAid. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/the_price_of_privilege_lr.pdf.
101. Ibid.
102. Rogers, D and Balázs, B. (2016) 'The view from deprivation: Poverty, inequality, and the distribution of wealth', in Pogge, T., Köhler, G. and Cizdadamora, A.D. (eds). *Poverty & the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): A critical assessment and a look forward*. London: Zed Books. Also: Society for International Development (2016) *State of East Africa report: Consolidating misery? The political economy of inequalities in east Africa*, Nairobi: Society for International Development. Available at: <http://www.sidint.net/sites/www.sidint.net/files/SoEA-2016.pdf>.
103. See: Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/>. Also: Premium Times (2012) '112 million Nigerians living below poverty level – report', *Premium Times*, 13 March 2012. Available at: http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/4211-112million_nigerians_living_below_poverty_level.html.
104. Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics and Federal Ministry of Youth Development (2012) *National baseline youth survey, final report*, Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics. Available at: http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/2102%20National%20Baseline%20Youth%20Survey%20Report_1.pdf.
105. UNDP (2015) *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*. Table 3 (Pp. 216 - 219). Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en>.
106. World Economic Outlook (2016) *Update of key WEO projections*. Available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/update/01/>.



So what does work?

Whereas high growth rates with no accompanying redistributive policies can increase inequality, studies have found that policies and economic approaches which make land, resources and capital widely available across the population, and which provide strong social safety nets that increase well-being and reduce risk, tend to reduce poverty and inequalities.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, these approaches also tend to protect economies from decline and instability. In a reversal of popular opinion, a study by researchers at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) found that lower levels of economic inequality contribute to sustainable economic growth.¹⁰⁸ Although *Not ready, still waiting* looks at policies, ActionAid believe that true transformation requires

more than “social bribery” where redistributive policies maintain the status quo rather than bring about real change.¹⁰⁹ Alongside policy, there must be an accompanying will to challenge the historical global and national drivers of inequality and structures of power that prevent change.

Governments must be confident of their monitoring and evaluation process. The 17 SDGs are supported by 230 global indicators which will capture results on a UN database.¹¹⁰ Governments such as Brazil's and Zambia's have already been gathering data.¹¹¹ For some other countries, monitoring systems are not in place and it will be difficult to tell if policies have been effective or not. Collecting evidence disaggregated by race, gender, sexuality, geography (including urban/rural), age, and differing abilities

107. Rogers, D and Balázs, B. (2016) 'The view from deprivation: Poverty, inequality, and the distribution of wealth', in Pogge, T., Köhler, G. and Cimdamore, A.D. (eds). *Poverty & the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): A critical assessment and a look forward*. London: Zed Books.

108. Dabla-Norris, E. and Kochhar, K. et al. (2015) *Causes and consequences of income inequality: A global perspective*, IMF staff discussion note, SDN/15/13. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2015/sdn1513.pdf>; and Ostry, J. D., Berg, A. and Tsangarides, G. (2014) *Redistribution, inequality, and growth*, IMF staff discussion note, SDN/14/02. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2014/sdn1402.pdf>.

109. Society for International Development (2016) *State of East Africa report: Consolidating misery? The political economy of inequalities in east Africa*, Nairobi: Society for International Development. Pp. 30. Available at: <http://www.sidint.net/sites/www.sidint.net/files/SoEA-2016.pdf>.

110. United Nations (2016) 'SDG indicators global database' [last updated 29 July 2016]. Available at: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>.

111. IBGE – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, IPEA – Institute for Applied Economic Research, PNAD – National Household Sample Survey and DIEESE – Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies. Also see: Zambia Living Conditions and Monitoring Survey Report and evidence produced by the Central Statistics Office.

will help meet the ambition to leave no one behind.¹¹² But systems for doing so are not yet in place in most countries. For example, to know if policies are effectively enabling women to have a voice in the workplace, evidence must show to what extent women are joining trade unions, an issue rarely explored in Labour Force Surveys.¹¹³ Evaluation of policies is essential as well, as this ensures reflection and adaptation. Finally, marginalised women need to be central to the design and ongoing evaluation process so that they have real power to monitor progress.¹¹⁴

When having a policy is an opportunity

When effective policies are in place, women's inequalities are reduced and women can better push for other changes. For example, in 2000, the Kamaiya Liberation Act freed thousands of Kamaiya people in Nepal from working as bonded labourers. Freed Kamaiya women said that the symbolic things that others saw as important, such as ID cards (which were initially only given to

freed men until a women's organisation fought for change), were actually less important and less life-changing than having joint ownership of land and as a result, having a say in household decision-making, or having the opportunity to earn money by joining with other women to lease land to grow and sell vegetables.¹¹⁵ Women in Nepal told ActionAid that the important thing for them is to have the confidence to negotiate new power dynamics. Krishni, long-standing campaigner for the rights of freed Kamaiya women, says three things have made a difference to women's lives. The first is freedom – women are now able to decide when to work, when to eat, and when to go outside, whereas before they didn't have enough time to eat, and had to do what the landlord said. The second is confidence – women are now able to talk and demand their rights; previously they were unable to leave the landlord's home and were, consequently, shy of strangers. The third is the ability to negotiate – women's joint land ownership (see below) now gives them their own house and a position of respect.¹¹⁶

When the Kamaiya bonded labourers in Nepal were freed, most were given land. But Laxmi Tharu missed out; her application may have been lost or mistakes made. Now, she lives on village land she has no rights over. For Laxmi, access to and joint ownership of land is much more important than getting a freed Kamaiya ID card in her own name; her income from vegetable farming means that she doesn't have to ask her husband to give her money any more.
PHOTO: RUTH KELLY/ACTIONAID



112. United Nations Economic and Social Council (2016) *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals*, Report of the Secretary-General, 24-27 July 2016. Available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2016/75&Lang=E.
 113. ILO (2016) 'Labour force surveys' [last updated 28 July 2016]. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/lfsurvey/lfsurvey.list?p_lang=en.
 114. IIED (2016) *Evaluation: a crucial ingredient for SDG success*, London: The International Institute for Environment and Development. Available at: <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17357IIED.pdf>.
 115. Correspondence between ActionAid Nepal and ActionAid UK. July 2016.
 116. Ibid.

The Nepal joint land ownership certificate doubles women's land titles between 2001 and 2011

Land ownership patterns, by gender, by class structure, and by foreign interests, are linked to levels of inequality in rural areas. In Nepal, following much civil society campaigning, the government introduced the Joint Land Certificate (JLC), issued to both husband and wife, through the Budget Policy of 2011/12.¹¹⁷ Civil society localised the policy. ActionAid Nepal and its partner organizations campaigned on women's rights to land in communities across the country.¹¹⁸ In addition, government tax incentives – 40% for people living in mountainous areas, 30% for rural people and 25% for urban dwellers – were introduced to encourage JLC take up.¹¹⁹ As a result, 2,093 women within ActionAid's programme areas received joint or single land-ownership certificate in 2013.¹²⁰ Across the country, in 2001, 9.73% of women had their name on land titles. By 2011 it had doubled to 19.71%.¹²¹



Bhagwati Tharu spent 25 years working for free as a 'Kamaiya' bonded labourer in her landlord's house. After they were liberated, she and her husband Chotelal moved onto land they were given by the government. Bhagwati's name is not on the deeds; the land is registered in Chotelal's name only. ActionAid's partner organisation, Kamaiya Mahila Jagaran Sama (KMJS) has seen 12,000 women receive joint land ownership certificates since they were freed from bonded labour in 2000. Bhagwati is still waiting. She is an active member of the group and is pushing her case.

PHOTO: RUTH KELLY/ACTIONAID

Uganda's affirmative action seeks to counteract historical discrimination faced by women

Uganda has made progress towards equality through provision for reserved seats for women in parliament and local governments, and by adding 1.5 points on top of women's exam grades to facilitate women's admissions to university.¹²² This effort is backed up by the 1995 Constitution, which explicitly highlights the need for equality between women and men under the law, as well as the right to equal opportunity. It says that, "The state shall take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition, or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them."¹²³ This has enabled the country to make significant progress in integrating women into its decision making processes.

Women hold 23% of parliamentary seats worldwide. Many of the countries in our study have policies to ensure women's greater participation in politics. Brazil and Haiti have a 30% quota for women in political parties.¹²⁴ The Senegal parity law, agreed in the National Assembly in May 2010, says that women should hold 50% of elected positions in governance bodies. ActionAid has been working to seize the opportunity presented by the Parity Law, working from the bottom up and training women to get involved in political decision making. As a result of ActionAid's and partners' work, by 2012 around 100 women had taken on seats at the local level.¹²⁵

117. Basnet, J., Dahal, K. and Battistelli, S. (2014) Greater empowerment and security of women through the Joint Land Ownership Certificate, Nepal. Case study of the ILC Database of Good Practices. Rome: ILC. Available at: http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/documents/resources/case_studies_leaflet_5_nepal.pdf

118. ActionAid Nepal (2014) *Annual Report Reflections and Learning*. P.14 Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/annual_report_final_approved_by_cd_june_04.pdf

119. Correspondence between ActionAid Nepal and ActionAid UK. July 2016.

120. ActionAid Nepal (2014) *Annual Report Reflections and Learning*. P.14 Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/annual_report_final_approved_by_cd_june_04.pdf

121. Correspondence between ActionAid Nepal and ActionAid UK. July 2016. 2015 data from Nepal's Ministry of Land reform.

122. Onsongo, J. (2009) *Affirmative action, gender equity and university admissions – Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania*. London Review of Education. vol. 7, issue. 1. Pp. 77. Available at: <http://sites.miis.edu/comparativeeducation/files/2013/01/Affirmative-Action-Kenya-Uganda-Tanzania.pdf>

123. Article 32 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995.

124. Article 17.1 of the 1987 amended Constitution adopts the principle of quota stipulating that "at least 30% of women have to be part of all decision-making structures at all levels of politics and public administration" and this is imposed to political parties in the article 31.1.1.

125. ActionAid Senegal (2013) *Annual report* [internal document].

Brazil enacts progressive domestic violence law 11.340

The 'Maria da Penha' law, adopted in 2006, criminalised violence against women and established new ways to support women and punish perpetrators, including measures to stop men harassing women, such as protection orders. In addition, it set up police departments with specific expertise in supporting women, and shelters to protect and care for women who have experienced violence. The law created a legal definition for femicide (the murder of a woman or girl for being female, through domestic violence, crime, or

discrimination against women). The law also promoted the adoption of gender diversity discussions in schools, gives lesbian couples the option to adopt or get married, and increases jail time for crimes against pregnant women, girls under 14, women over 60 and people with disabilities. The increase in reported cases of sexual violence suggests that the situation is getting worse, especially for black women, but also that it is becoming more visible.¹²⁶ The next step is to address violence against women and girls in public services to ensure women can safely use economic opportunities, and have safe access to transport.



The women's movement
march to demand public lighting in partnership with ActionAid Brazil as part of a Safe Cities for Women campaign in Heliópolis, São Paulo.
PHOTO: ACTIONAID

What can be done where policies do not work to reduce inequalities?

Some policies have a purely negative impact on women's inequality. For example, the Nigerian government has taken policy decisions designed to revive the slumping economy but which have

deepened inequality. The 66% increase in the fuel price between 2012 -2016 and increase in electricity tariffs in Nigeria put further burdens on poor women's resources.¹²⁷ The immediate effect of the energy cost hike was enormous, quickly raising the price of food items, household facilities and services normally consumed by poor people.

126. Waiselfisz, J. J. (2016) *Mapa da violência 2015: Homicídio de mulheres no Brasil*, Brasília: Faculdade Latino-Americana de Ciências Sociais. Available at: http://www.mapadaviolencia.org.br/pdf2015/MapaViolencia_2015_mulheres.pdf.

127. Ejoh, E. (2016) 'Fuel price hike: How Nigeria wasted N10trn on subsidy', *Vanguard*, 25 May 2016. Available at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/05/fuel-price-hike-nigeria-wasted-n10trn-subsidy/>.

However, where there is a policy in place that is intended to reduce women's inequalities, it can provide opportunities for civil society to push for change, even if the policy is initially not well thought through. For example, the Social Cash Transfer programme in Zambia gives 70 kwacha (US\$6.30) per month to all households, without consideration of the size of the household.¹²⁸ This means that householders with eight children receives the same transfer as families with just one child. In addition, due to poor targeting, insufficient resources and a fragmented approach, the transfers do not reach families who need support the most.¹²⁹

Where creeping growth of privatised education, health, water, and other services is contributing to increasing inequality and poverty, and richer countries are contributing to this trend,¹³⁰ both global and national civil society can be part of a movement for change underpinned by local collective action.¹³¹ For example, in March 2016, the government of

Liberia entered into a memorandum of understanding with a private multinational company, Bridge International Academies, to pilot a one-year public-private partnership in 50 schools, extending to all primary schools in 2017.¹³² This will cost the Liberian government approximately US\$65 million. Bridge has been widely condemned for raising prices, for poor quality teaching and administration, and has been recently banned in Uganda supported by civil society action.¹³³ In June 2016, after lobbying by civil society Liberia's senate voted to privatise the national water corporation, a surprising decision given evidence that doing so raises costs and reduces transparency.¹³⁴ There are more general fears over the role of the private sector in the SDGs given the increased role it plays in development financing. The private sector has a role to play, but at what cost?¹³⁵ Civil society must play a role in using existing policies as leverage for change, and protecting rights from private sector interest.

128. Government of Zambia (2014) *Social cash transfer (SCT) programme overview*, Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child. Available at: <http://www.mcdmch.gov.zm/sites/default/files/downloads/Social%20Cash%20Transfer%20Fact%20sheets.pdf>.

129. Government of Zambia (2014) *National Gender Policy*, Ministry of Gender and Child Development. Available at: <http://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/zam152916.pdf>.

130. Anderson, M. (2015) 'DfID accused of heightening inequality through support for private sector', *the Guardian*, 24 April 2015. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/apr/24/dfid-private-sector-support-inequality-global-justice-now-report>.

131. Ibid.

132. See: Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Education, Government of Liberia and Bridge International Academics. Available at: <http://www.bridgeinternationalacademies.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Summary-of-MoU.pdf>.

133. Note that the plans for this initiative are in flux as further investors join in, for example, the Molugo foundation, the Chinese Government and potentially UNESCO. See: Rumney, E. (2016) 'UN education chief slams Liberia over schools PPP plan', *Public Finance International*, 31 March 2016. Available at: <http://www.publicfinanceinternational.org/news/2016/03/un-education-chief-slams-liberia-over-schools-ppp-plan>. For information on Uganda see: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/08/17/saying-kids-were-endangered-uganda-is-closing-schools-backed-by-u-s-world-bank-bill-gates-and-mark-zuckerberg/>.

134. Karmo, H. (2016) 'Senators vote to privatise Liberia water and sewer corporation', *Front Page Africa*, June 2016. Available at: <http://www.frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php/news/971-senators-vote-to-privatize-liberia-water-and-sewer-corporation>. And: Transnational Institute (2014) '180 cities take back public control of water showing remunicipalisation is here to stay', Transnational Institute press release, 13 November 2014. Available at: <https://www.tni.org/en/article/180-cities-take-back-public-control-of-water-showing-remunicipalisation-is-here-to-stay>.

135. CIVICUS (2016) *State of civil society report 2016*, London: CIVICUS. Available at: <http://civicus.org/images/documents/SOCS2016/summaries/SoCS-full-review.pdf>.

4. Why are countries not ready?

Conflict; ongoing political upheaval; pressures from private sector interests, multilateral institutions and richer countries' policies; governments which do not recognise human rights obligations; and lack of political will – these are all reasons why developing country governments may not be ready to apply the policies required to achieve the two inequality SDGs.¹³⁶ In such circumstances, power tends to be concentrated among elites in government or in the private sector (this is called “corporate capture”), and there is little motivation,

and some genuine fear, amongst those elites about participatory local governance or a rights-based approach to development. Unsurprisingly, when the elites are largely men, or are women far removed from poor women's experiences, an economic model that prioritises women's equality is less likely to be top of the agenda. Moreover, structural reforms tied to IMF and multilateral development bank loans often impose austerity and prevent national policy action that could reduce inequalities.¹³⁷

5. Conclusions

Addressing inequalities and the SDGs will require major changes on the part of developing nations, as well as richer countries and multilateral institutions, including taking the following actions:

1. **Shift policy decision making power** away from those who currently hold power and influence, including multilateral institutions, governments of high-income countries, elite groups and multinational corporations – and towards developing country governments.
2. Develop and hold governments accountable to **redistributive national plans** with policies that support the accomplishment of the SDGs. Such policies would aim to:
 - recognise, redistribute and reduce women's unpaid care work
 - improve opportunities for decent work and

- wages for women and young people
 - increase women's access to education and health
 - stop violence against women and girls.
 - improve women's mobility, and their capacity to organise and participate in decision making
 - improve women's access to education and health, and their access to and control over natural and economic resources.
3. Put in place appropriate **systems, governance, financial support, and monitoring and evaluation** programmes so policies can be implemented with sufficient information, infrastructure and budget, and rigorously monitored by women and girls who are given the power to hold decision makers accountable.

136. For evidence of policy readiness being reduced by private sector interests see: Stiglitz, J. E. (2002) *Globalisation and its discontents*. USA: W. W. Norton & Company; and Korten, D. C. (1995) *When corporations rule the world*. Connecticut: Kumarian Press. Also: Society for International Development (2016) *State of East Africa report: Consolidating misery? The political economy of inequalities in east Africa*, Nairobi: Society for International Development. Pp. 30. Available at: <http://www.sidint.net/sites/www.sidint.net/files/SoEA-2016.pdf>

137. Kentikelenis, A. E., Stubbs, T. H. and King, L. P. (2016) 'IMF conditionality and development policy space, 1985-2014' Review of *International Political Economy*, 2016. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group. Available at: http://www.kentikelenis.net/uploads/3/1/8/9/31894609/kentikelenis2016_imf_conditionality_and_development_policy_space.pdf.

Annex of information

1. Richer countries policy readiness table

| Proxy indicator | SDG #17 | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| | <i>Business Ethics: Has the country endorsed Ruggie (UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights)? And is there a National Action Plan?¹³⁸</i> | <i>Gender: Is support given to women's rights organizations rising between latest figures?¹³⁹</i> | <i>Tax: Do the country's anti-tax haven (CFC) rules apply in practice to corporate income shifted out of developing countries, as well as the country itself?¹⁴⁰</i> | <i>Is the Quality of Aid (QuODA) in the top 50% globally?¹⁴¹</i> | <i>Trade: How many BITs has the country signed?¹⁴²</i> |
| | Y/N | Y/N | Y/N | Y/N | Number |
| 1. Australia | N | Y | Y | N: 4.72 (aid is .33% of GNP). | 46 |
| 2. Denmark | Y | N | Y | Y: 6.57 (aid is .85% of budget). | 55 |
| 3. UK | Y | Y | N | Y: 6.2 (aid is .71% of budget). | 110 |
| 4. US | N | N | N | N: 4.22 (aid is .18% of budget). | 21 |

2. Methodology for statistic on average extra years worked by women over their lifetime

Economists Without Borders¹⁴³ worked with ActionAid UK to produce the following statistic. Here follows a brief methodology. A more detailed methodology is available at: www.actionaid.org/inequality

Globally, a young woman beginning to seek income today can expect to work for the equivalent of an average of four years more than her male peers over her lifetime, if the current imbalances in unpaid care work aren't addressed.

What we did

- The figures are based on analysis of 217 countries: 78 'developed' countries (as defined by the World Bank as High Income); 138 'developing' countries (countries defined by the World Bank as lower or upper middle income, or low income); and one country categorised by the World Bank as 'unclassified' (Argentina).
- We calculated the estimated total additional hours that women work compared to men by calculating global daily averages of paid and unpaid hours of work for women and for men, and then subtracting the total number of paid

138. Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. See: <https://business-humanrights.org/en/un-guiding-principles>.

139. Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Donor Charts. Statistics based on DAC Members' reporting on the Gender Equality Policy Marker, 2013-2014 Creditor Reporting System database (OECD 2016). <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Aid-in-support-of-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment.pdf>.

140. CFC rules deter multinationals from shifting profits into tax havens, by imposing a higher tax rate on these profits. Effective CFC rules deter big companies from shifting profits out of third countries (including developing countries) not just out of the country where the company is resident. For UK see ActionAid (2012) Collateral Damage; How government plans to water down UK anti-tax haven rules could cost developing countries – and the UK – billions. Available at: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/doc_lib/collateral_damage.pdf.

141. Center for Global Development Commitment to Development Index. Available at: <http://www.cgdev.org/cdi-2015>. See also: http://www.cgdev.org/files/1424481_file_CGDQuODApublish_final3.pdf and http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/QUODA_final_revised_september.pdf

142. UNCTAD Investment Policy Hub. <http://investmentpolicyhub.unctad.org/IIA/CountryBits/221>

143. See: Economists With Out Borders: <http://economistswithoutborders.net/uk/>.

and unpaid hours worked by men from the total number of paid and unpaid hours worked by women. We then used the average daily difference in time to calculate the estimated average extra time women work over their lifetimes, based on an average global life expectancy for women of 69 years (based on UN data for 2000-2005),¹⁴⁴ the average working age of 16-64 years, and the average global working day for men (taking account of both paid and unpaid hours).

- Our calculations of the estimated additional work women undertake compared to men uses UN data on both paid and unpaid work¹⁴⁵ and ILO data on working hours,¹⁴⁶ and present the estimated overall average *difference* between these, as well as the difference in time spent on unpaid work.
- Paid work refers to work which is financially remunerated. According to the UN definition used for these data sets, unpaid work refers to care work as well as community or volunteer work. Unpaid care work includes caring for children, the sick and the elderly, household chores and preparing and cooking food (ActionAid also includes some community work, such as caring for sick and elderly community members, within its definition of unpaid care). The UN defines voluntary and community work to include volunteer services for organisations, unpaid community work, and informal help to other households, among other activities.¹⁴⁷
- The estimated monetary value of women's additional work is calculated based on an estimated global average wage, for which we

used country level World Bank data on GDP per capita¹⁴⁸ and Marta Guerriero's (2012) data on labour share of income.¹⁴⁹ We then multiplied this average global wage by the additional total hours, and additional unpaid hours, of work undertaken by women compared to men.

Caveats and disclaimers

1. The estimate of average extra working hours of women over a lifetime does not reflect the fact that in many developing countries, life expectancies, and thus working lives, are often much shorter for people living in poverty, particularly in many cases women. It also does not take account of the fact that many girls, as well as some boys, especially in poor countries, undertake unpaid care work from a much younger age than 15.
2. Our estimate of the extra years worked by the average woman over her lifetime is based on recent data and is based on a static moment in time - it does not reflect shifts in patterns of paid/unpaid/total hours work over time, including into the future. As such we have qualified the statement so it refers to 'a young woman entering job market today', and is based on a projection of 'if nothing changes'.
3. We do not mean to suggest that all unpaid work, including unpaid care work, should be remunerated, or to ascribe a monetary value to unpaid care, which includes what we believe to be intrinsically invaluable activities, such as loving and nurturing children and family. Rather, ActionAid believes women's unpaid

144. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables. Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP.241. Available at: https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf, Pp. 10.

145. UN Statistics Division Gender Statistics. See: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/timeuse/>

146. ILO Statistics. See: http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/help_home/data_by_subject/subject-details/indicator-details-by-subject.jspx?_afz=VL22xZ5qbEwh4Z7_Vn-iLz0kD8ozWJS-luuCUYYd9fSxWn1-3amR!86296383?indicator=EMP_TEMP_SEX_HOW_NB&subject=EMP&datasetCode=Y1&collectionCode=Y1&adf.ctrl-state=yo6mas0ft_505&_afzLoop=548615924960526

147. Personal communication with UN Stats, August 2016.

148. World Bank Data. See: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD&country=>

149. Guerriero, M (2012) *Labour Share of Income Around the World* Available at: <http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/files/Guerriero2012.pdf>.

150. See: ActionAid (2013) *Making Care Visible: Women's unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya*. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/making_care_visible.pdf

work should be recognised, reduced and redistributed – between women and men, and between the household and the state.

4. The figures are estimates rather than precise calculations, designed to give an indication of the scale of women's economic inequality, particularly in relation to women's unpaid care work, drawing on the most recent available data.
5. There were significant gaps in the data, for which averages were calculated based on World Bank income classifications. There were also significant variations in the date and age ranges for which data were collected and available.
6. As with all averages, the figures on women's unpaid work compared to men's has significant variations within and between

countries, including between different groups of women who may face further economic and social discrimination because of intersecting aspects of their identity (e.g. race, age, caste, ethnicity, sexuality).

7. In any study of labour, demographics play a crucial role. We have done our best to include the limited information that we had by weighting our averages by the relative proportion of working age (i.e. 16-64) men and women. However, there are many other factors that would ideally need to be taken into account to get a more realistic picture of the actual and counterfactual work commitments of women and men, e.g. age, education, marital status, as well as country level data on life expectancy and working age populations.

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to achieve greater human rights for all and defeat poverty. We believe people in poverty have the power within them to create change for themselves, their families and communities. ActionAid is a catalyst for that change.

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