



## OECD Development Centre – UNESCO International Workshop

### *Gender Equality and Progress in Societies*

*(Preliminary version)*

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2010**  
**OECD Conference Centre**  
**Room CC (tbc)**  
**2, rue André Pascal**  
**75016 Paris, France**

With the support of:



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## Background note

1. Gender equality is an important facet of progress, as reflected in the Millennium Development Goals. However, while gender equality has become a policy objective of almost universal acceptance, measuring its status and tracking its progress is remaining a difficult undertaking. Within the context of the 15 years' anniversary of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in Beijing and around the date of International Women's Day 2010, bringing UNESCO and the OECD Development Centre together in an International Workshop on "Gender Equality and Progress in Societies" is a unique opportunity to review progress in gender equality. While composite indicators such as the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) of UNDP and the Gender-Gap-Index of the World Economic Forum are very useful instruments to track the general situation of gender equality on a national level of countries allowing performances to be benchmarked, it is equally important to capture local and national aspirations in order to influence adequate policy measures. In this context, the role of local cultures should be more intensively studied as they often determine the outcome of policy actions.
2. The OECD has long-standing and wide-ranging experience in identifying and promoting best policies and practices. OECD analysis and indicators show that outcomes for women and men vary across many different areas of life. Among the different Directorates working on the topic, the OECD Development Centre provides a unique set of resources with its [Gender, Institutions and Development Database](#) (GID-DB), [the Social Institutions and Gender Index](#) (SIGI) and [Wikigender](#) covering over 120 countries. The MENA-OECD Investment Programme, hosted by the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, has established a Women's Business Network composed of business leaders, representatives of government, civil society, and businesswomen's associations, which supports policy and economic reforms that encourage women's entrepreneurship and employment in the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs has developed an online database on family outcomes and family policies with indicators for all OECD countries. The OECD Development Co-operation Directorate is continually working on a range of products relating to the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, such as the Development Assistance Committee's "Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment". While the OECD has traditionally focused on economic measures, it has recently been at the forefront of [the Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies](#), which focuses on additional dimensions of progress, based on the values of society. As part of its work on gender mainstreaming, gender equality issues and the role of women in development, in particular as analysed through the social institutions lens, the OECD is launching on the occasion of this International Workshop the "*Atlas of Gender and Development : How Social Norms Affect Gender Equality in non-OECD Countries*".
3. UNESCO is a specialised UN agency promoting the respect for shared values and for the dignity and equality of all cultures, and it has recently made gender equality a global priority in its Medium Term Strategy for 2008-2013. The "Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2008-2013", which operationalises this policy commitment, was presented to and endorsed by its Member States in April 2009. The Action Plan follows a two-pronged approach involving both gender-specific initiatives and gender mainstreaming within UNESCO's five Major Programmes (i.e. Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture and Communication/Information).

4. Participants at this International Workshop will include high-level policymakers, government and donor agency representatives, gender equality experts and development practitioners from international organisations, non-governmental organisations, as well as research institutes.

### **Objectives and Structure of the International Workshop**

5. Organised jointly by UNESCO and the OECD Development Centre, this International Workshop on "*Gender Equality and Progress in Societies*" is an opportunity to consider gender equality from a broader perspective while addressing its inherent socio-cultural-economic implications. The main goal of this International Workshop will therefore be to develop a common understanding of better ways to measure and address remaining gaps in gender equality, seen from a more dynamic and participatory angle.
6. There will be a small exhibition booth outside the conference room, showcasing work on gender (publications, reports, leaflets, etc) from the different OECD Directorates as well as from UNESCO. This will allow for informal discussion exchanges between participants.
7. Participants will be able to discover the [www.wikigender.org](http://www.wikigender.org) platform on a computer screen outside the conference room. This website will also be used as a follow up to the workshop and participants will be able to share their views, experiences and best practices directly on the platform. This will help to transform discussions held at the workshop into a concrete agenda for action.

### **Contact**

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