Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries

FOSTERING DIVERSITY FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH



OECD

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FOSTERING DIVERSITY FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH



BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Foreword

Gender equality in public life is a global challenge. Governments across the world have implemented a range of innovations to advance gender equality, but significant gaps continue to exist. Women still lag behind men in access to decision-making and leadership positions in public and economic life, from community to global levels. Gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship remains elusive, as well as access to resources, services and information.

While the degree of challenges faced by countries across the global community may differ, the aspirations are often the same. Maximising the use of talent in the economy and society is critical to achieve inclusive growth and to foster national competitiveness. Equal access of both men and women to public and economic opportunities is part of a more equitable and sustainable economy and society. Gender diversity in decision-making contributes to improved trust in public institutions and favours more informed and inclusive policy making.

This report, prepared within the broader framework of the OECD Gender Initiative, provides a comprehensive, evidence-driven assessment of how governments can play a more effective role in leading the equality agenda. Governments play a crucial role in promoting equal rights, responsibilities and access to opportunities for men and women. The study gives an overview of where OECD countries stand with regard to gender policies, drawing valuable policy recommendations. The report argues that a more systematic and whole-of-government approach to promoting gender equality should include embedding gender perspectives in all stages of government decision-making, from design to implementation and evaluation of laws and policies. It also requires clear channels to express voices of both women and men, effective and gender-diverse institutions for implementing a gender equality agenda, sound tools for gender-aware decision-making and robust evidence to measure progress in gender equality.

The report examines the barriers to women's access to decision-making positions, provides a cross-country comparison of instruments used to close gender gaps and highlights policies and measures needed to promote gender equality across the wide spectrum of public leadership roles. Its recommendations provide solid ground for developing a forward looking OECD agenda on gender equality, which would promote a comprehensive approach to embedding equality considerations into policy making, as well as enabling women's empowerment in public life.

This work draws on the OECD's longstanding research and experience on gender issues, as illustrated by the 1980 pioneering Declaration on Policies for the Employment of Women, and the most recent 2013 Recommendation of the OECD Council on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship. Gender balance is part of a forward-looking and evidence-driven contribution to the OECD trust and inclusive growth agendas and helps advance OECD work on New Approaches to Economic Challenges. It can also support the G20 agenda on gender equality, thus serving as a milestone in

strengthening empowerment of women and girls. Political leaders have the responsibility to address this critical social, economic and human rights challenge. Our aim at the OECD is to advance the global debate on gender equality and to support the needed political leadership in taking the equality agenda forward.



Angel Gurría

OECD Secretary-General

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Table of contents

Executive summary . . . 11

Chapter 1. **Mapping women's access to public life in OECD countries** . . . 15

Rationale for the study . . . 16
Study objectives . . . 18
Methodology and content . . . 19
References . . . 20

Chapter 2. **Women's leadership in public life** . . . 23

Key findings . . . 24
Introduction . . . 25
Access to politics and the political executive . . . 25
Access to the judiciary . . . 53
Access to senior civil service . . . 65
Women's participation in trade unions and civil society . . . 76
Key policy recommendations . . . 79
References . . . 82
Annex 2.A1. Categories for Table 2.1 . . . 93

Chapter 3. **Women as public employees** . . . 95

Key findings . . . 96
Introduction . . . 96
Public sector employment trends . . . 97
Gender-sensitive human resources management policies in the public sector . . . 111
Institutional frameworks for promoting gender balance in the public sector . . . 117
Policies to promote work-life balance in the public sector . . . 122
Gender equality and the future of women in public employment . . . 133
Key policy recommendations . . . 135
References . . . 137

Chapter 4. **Institutional dimensions of gender equality** . . . 145

Key findings . . . 146
Introduction . . . 147
Gender equality strategies and action plans . . . 149
Evidence-based and gender-sensitive policy making . . . 170
Gender-disaggregated evidence for better policies . . . 176
Gender impact assessments . . . 183
Gender-responsive budgeting . . . 190
Public consultation and stakeholder engagement . . . 196
Key policy recommendations . . . 198
Towards a whole-of-government approach to gender equality and gender-sensitive policies . . . 198
References . . . 201

Figures

Figure 1.1 Key elements of gender-responsive policy and governance infrastructure . . . 17
Figure 2.1 Women in key decision-making positions and income inequality in OECD countries 26
Figure 2.2 Women ministers and confidence in national governments in OECD countries (2012) . . . 27
Figure 2.3 Share of women parliamentarians (lower or single house of parliament), OECD and partner countries (2012) . . . 28
Figure 2.4 Share of women ministers (2005 and 2012) . . . 29
Figure 2.5 Share of women parliamentarians (lower or single house of parliament) and legislated gender quotas (2012 and 2002) . . . 36
Figure 2.6 Women as court presidents compared to their share of professional judgeships (2010) 54
Figure 2.7 Share of women supreme court justices, 2012 or latest year available . . . 55
Figure 2.8 Women in top management positions compared to their share of posts in central government workforce (2010) . . . 66
Figure 3.1 Women in general government compared to women in the labour force (2010) . . . 98
Figure 3.2 Share of central government jobs filled by women (2000 and 2010) . . . 99
Figure 3.3 Share of central government jobs filled by women, by occupation groups (2010) . . . 101
Figure 3.4 Women's representation in full-time and part-time central government employment (2010) . . . 104
Figure 3.5 Gender pay gap in earnings for full-time employees (2000, 2005 and 2010) . . . 107
Figure 3.6 Gender equality measures in public services in OECD countries . . . 114
Figure 3.7 Examples of hiring and promotion targets for female public sector employment in some OECD countries . . . 115
Figure 3.8 Central government laws or policies that explicitly seek to enhance the recruitment/promotion (and career advancement) of women in the civil service (2012) . . . 118
Figure 3.9 Work-life balance measures in public employment in OECD countries (2012) . . . 124
Figure 3.10 Maternity and paternity leave length in OECD countries, weeks (2012) . . . 127
Figure 3.11 Length of parental leave in OECD countries: paid and unpaid in public and private sectors (2012) . . . 128
Figure 4.1 Barriers to effective pursuit of gender mainstreaming and equality policies (2012) . . . 148
Figure 4.2 Thematic focus of gender equality strategies (2012) . . . 150
Figure 4.3 Central gender equality institutions (2012) . . . 153
Figure 4.4 Main responsibilities of central gender institutions in OECD countries (2012) . . . 156
Figure 4.5 National oversight institutions for gender equality (2012) . . . 159
Figure 4.6 Parliamentary committees on gender equality in OECD countries (2012) . . . 160
Figure 4.7 Major success factors in gender mainstreaming (2012) . . . 164
Figure 4.8 Co-ordination mechanisms for gender equality initiatives (2012) . . . 165
Figure 4.9 Tools for vertical co-ordination of gender equality initiatives (2012) . . . 167
Figure 4.10 Mechanisms used by national ministries to ensure the implementation of gender equality legislation and initiatives (2012) . . . 169
Figure 4.11 Collection of gender-disaggregated data across sectors (2012) . . . 177
Figure 4.12 Key challenges in gender-disaggregated data collection (2012) . . . 178
Figure 4.13 Measures undertaken by countries to improve the collection of gender-disaggregated data at the national level of government (2012) . . . 182
Figure 4.14 Requirements for gender impact assessments at the central/federal level of government (2012) . . . 185
Figure 4.15 Mechanisms used by OECD countries to ensure application of gender analysis (2012) . . . 189
Figure 4.16 Gender-responsive budgeting in OECD countries (2012) . . . 191
Figure 4.17 Tools for introducing gender-responsive budgeting (2012) . . . 193
Figure 4.18 Gender-responsive budgeting implementation mechanisms (2012) . . . 196

Tables

Table 2.1 Key elements of quota laws and political systems in OECD countries . . . 40
Table 3.1 Unit responsible for embedding gender concerns in human resources management policies for civil servants employed in central government: presence and location (2012) . . . 120
Table 3.2 Childcare facilities and subsidies for childcare in the public sector in OECD countries (2012) . . . 131

Boxes

Box 2.1 Gender parity in parliaments and cabinets . . . 31
Box 2.2 Examples of quota laws . . . 38
Box 2.3 French women's path to power . . . 42
Box 2.4 Enabling women to reach decision-making posts in Sweden . . . 44
Box 2.5 Women's political leadership in Rwanda . . . 46
Box 2.6 "Family-friendly" parliaments . . . 47
Box 2.7 Political training for women in Italy . . . 49
Box 2.8 A framework for gender-sensitive parliaments . . . 50
Box 2.9 Breaking the legislative glass ceiling in Chile . . . 52
Box 2.10 Examples of quota regulations in the judiciaries . . . 59
Box 2.11 Appointment commissions (or committees) . . . 61
Box 2.12 Transparency in the judiciary selection process . . . 64
Box 2.13 The Väterzentrum Berlin . . . 68
Box 2.14 New Zealand's stocktaking of gender balance in state sector boards and committees . . . 72
Box 2.15 Sweden's "The State Leads Equally" programme . . . 73
Box 2.16 Policies to support work-life balance in senior management positions . . . 74
Box 2.17 Setting targets to increase gender balance in senior public sector posts . . . 75
Box 3.1 Portrait of women in public sector employment in OECD countries . . . 99
Box 3.2 Spain's "Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men in the Information Society" . . . 103
Box 3.3 Adjusted and unadjusted wage gap . . . 108
Box 3.4 Gender pay equity: an example of a definition from the Federal Government of Canada . . . 110
Box 3.5 OECD countries' efforts to reduce the persisting gender pay gap in the general labour market and in the public sector . . . 112
Box 3.6 Canada's Employment Equity Act . . . 116
Box 3.7 New Zealand's initiative to address the leadership pipeline by attracting and retaining talented women . . . 119
Box 3.8 The Canadian Public Service Commission and Employment Equity Act . . . 121
Box 3.9 Systemic data and research approaches to women and gender issues in public services . . . 122
Box 3.10 Highlights from Canadian studies on balancing work and life . . . 123
Box 3.11 Sweden's encouragement of dual parent workforce participation and parental leave use . . . 129
Box 3.12 Onsite childcare facilities enabling working mothers to return to work and stay in work . . . 132
Box 3.13 The role of policy in enabling women's full-time employment and better work-life balance . . . 134
Box 4.1 Defining gender equality and gender mainstreaming . . . 147
Box 4.2 Japan's "Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality" . . . 150
Box 4.3 Mexico's National Institute for Women . . . 155
Box 4.4 Spain's ministerial and university Equality Units . . . 157
Box 4.5 IPU plan of action for gender-sensitive parliaments . . . 160
Box 4.6 The United States White House Council on Women and Girls . . . 161
Box 4.7 Parliamentary committees in OECD member countries that address gender equality and women's empowerment . . . 162
Box 4.8 Belgium's Federal Government Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Group . . . 165
Box 4.9 South Africa's National Council Against Gender-Based Violence . . . 166
Box 4.10 Examples of regulations potentially having a greater impact on women than men . . . 170

Box 4.11 When to mainstream? – The policy process 171
Box 4.12 Examples of gender mainstreaming in OECD countries 172
Box 4.13 Gender mainstreaming in Israel: a case study of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour 178
Box 4.14 Designing qualitative and quantitative indicators for gender equity policy-making 179
Box 4.15 Promising plans for tracking gender budget allocations 180
Box 4.16 Uses of gender-sensitive indicators in OECD countries 183
Box 4.17 EU criteria for gender impact assessment 186
Box 4.18 Gender impact assessments in OECD countries 187
Box 4.19 Gender-responsive budgeting in OECD and key partner countries 192
Box 4.20 Gender-responsive budgeting in the United Kingdom: the critical role of civil society 194

Executive summary

The business case for women in public life

Empowering women and fully leveraging their skills and leadership in the global economy, in politics and in society are essential to maximising a nation's competitiveness, since diverse leadership is more likely to find innovative solutions to foster inclusive growth.

Gender diversity in public institutions – such as parliaments, executives and courts – is particularly crucial, given that these institutions make decisions and create rules that affect people's rights, behaviours and life choices; influence the distribution of goods and services in society; and determine access to public and private resources. As such, ensuring that decision-making bodies reflect the diversity of the societies they represent can provide a balanced perspective in designing and implementing these rules, thus enabling an inclusive approach to policy making and service delivery.

Indeed, the data points to lower levels of inequality in countries with a greater share of women in legislatures. It also shows a positive relationship between women ministers and confidence in national governments. Furthermore, an increased presence of women cabinet ministers is associated with a rise in public health spending across a large sample of countries. Women politicians more often bring attention to such issues as gender-based violence, family-friendly policies and responsiveness to citizen needs. A judiciary that is representative of a country's population and its different perspectives is found to evoke greater societal trust, add to the credibility of the judicial system and bring new insights to different challenges. Finally, a diverse public sector at all levels helps to achieve fairness and improves the quality of service delivery through a better understanding of the citizenry.

Yet despite educational improvements and increased women's representation in the public sector, gaps still remain in women's access to opportunities and equal treatment in public life. These range from uneven access to decision-making posts across the public sector to the persistent pay gap and women's concentration in lower-paid occupational groups. A co-ordinated and whole-of-government response is required to address these challenges in a coherent and effective manner and to mainstream gender perspectives into all stages of policy and decision-making cycles.

Women's leadership in public life

Women have made important strides in public life across OECD countries and beyond. They increasingly serve as heads of state, parliamentarians, ambassadors, Supreme Court judges and senior administrative officials. They are well represented across the public sector.

Despite substantial progress, however, significant gaps remain in women's representation at the top echelons of power.

For example, on average, women represent less than one-third of decision-making posts in all branches of power in OECD countries. Thus, in 2012, women held 27% of seats in lower or single houses of parliament, 25% of ministerial positions in the political executive, 29% of top public sector management positions and 27% of judicial posts. Women's access to leadership tends to be hampered by working conditions – such as long working hours, unpredictable schedules and limited work-life balance arrangements – and a workplace culture that may perpetuate unconscious biases against women.

Concerted national and international efforts are required to close the remaining gaps in public leadership. Steps taken by some OECD governments range from equality laws, targets and quotas, to training and development programmes, encouraging work-life balance at the top and awareness-raising campaigns. However, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and the combination of policies and the effectiveness of interventions depends to a large extent on historical and cultural factors, political systems and political will. Importantly, encouraging men to take an active part in sharing unpaid responsibilities and taking advantage of work-life balance solutions (e.g. parental and paternity leaves) may help reduce stereotypes and support women's access to leadership posts.

Women in the public sector

For decades, women have been better represented in the public sector as compared to the private sector, due to family-friendly employment conditions and equal-opportunity policies. Yet, despite good representation, women tend to be concentrated in lower-grade and lower-pay occupations. For example, across OECD countries, women occupy about 65% of secretarial positions in central governments. Women are more likely than men to work part-time or have temporary contracts, which is largely explained by their family care responsibilities. While such work arrangements can help balance work and family life in the short and medium-terms, part-time or temporary workers may have fewer career development opportunities, face lower pay rates and higher rates of old-age poverty. These work arrangements are also viewed as less compatible with executive leadership and management positions: less than 1% of women employed part-time are in top management jobs.

To close these gaps, OECD countries are introducing a range of measures, which include positive action policies (e.g. diversity targets, employment equity laws), coaching, sponsorship and leadership development programmes, and initiatives to ensure pay equity, equal pay and work-life balance. Some countries are supporting working parents by facilitating childcare arrangements (through providing childcare facilities or subsidising childcare costs). Further efforts are needed, however, to develop employment paths to ease the move from part-time to full-time work, to reduce persistent gender pay gaps and to enable women to embark on diverse career paths.

Making it happen institutionally

Closing the identified representation gaps and successful development and implementation of broader policies promoting gender equality across all policy sectors (such as employment, education, entrepreneurship, housing, access to finance and beyond) depends on strategic government capacities to adopt a co-ordinated and whole-of-government

approach to promoting gender equality, and mainstreaming gender into all stages of policy making and service delivery cycles. More specifically, this requires:

- *Developing a clear, government-wide strategy* that can outline a course for gender equality reform. While most OECD countries have developed gender equality strategies, to be effective they must be supported by realistic targets and both long- and medium-term strategic milestones.
- *Establishing strong and gender-diverse public institutions and mechanisms to ensure accountability and sustainability of gender initiatives*. Sustainability of gender equality initiatives and inclusive approaches to policy making require public institutions that embrace diversity among decision-makers, have clear roles and responsibilities and enable full citizen and civil society engagement. All OECD countries have established central gender institutions and oversight mechanisms, although their types and functions depend largely on country context. Ensuring clear mandates and sufficient authority, resources and capacity to influence policy decisions will be critical to the effectiveness of these institutions.
- *Strengthening tools for evidence-based policy making.* Gender impact assessments (GIAs) serve as important tools for embedding gender considerations in the process of policy and programme development and implementation. The use of GIAs is more common for draft regulations: of the countries responding to the OECD survey, for example, 84% reported requiring GIAs for draft legislation compared to 37% for understanding the gender impacts of legislation that has come into force. An important application of GIA is gender-responsive budgeting, which depicts gender dimensions of revenues and highlights gender-differentiated effects of budgetary policies. While 57% of OECD countries report implementing gender-responsive budgeting at the national level, this practice is more limited at the regional and local levels.
- *Gathering and using reliable evidence disaggregated by gender for informed policy decisions*. OECD countries increasingly report collecting data that measure both women and men's empowerment and that is disaggregated by gender. With this purpose, countries have made different provisions for mainstreaming a gender perspective in national statistical systems, performance measurement and monitoring mechanisms. Yet, further efforts are required to develop evidence to understand the impacts of policy decisions on different groups of men and women across the full range of policy sectors, including entrepreneurship and gender-based violence. Closing these gaps would be critical to strengthening evidence-based and inclusive decision-making processes and advancing gender equality.

Chapter 1

Mapping women's access to public life in OECD countries

Closing persistent gender gaps in public life has emerged as a critical policy issue for OECD countries in their efforts to foster inclusive growth and restore trust and confidence in public institutions. This chapter maps women's access to public life and highlights the rationale and the scope for the study. It outlines study objectives and details the methodology adopted in preparing the report.

This report identifies the main drivers for closing gender gaps in the public domain, and for developing policy processes and institutional frameworks that can identify and respond to the needs of both men and women. It highlights active measures to advance gender equality in public life and provides actionable recommendations to governments, supported by examples of good practices from OECD countries and key partner countries.

The report was prepared by the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate (GOV) at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), within the framework of activities of the OECD Public Governance Committee and its Public Employment and Management Network. It also falls under the broader framework of the OECD Gender Initiative launched by Ministers in 2010 to help governments in OECD and non-OECD countries promote gender equality by deepening the knowledge base on gender equality issues; further developing indicators to measure progress in gender equality; developing evidence-based policy recommendations; and enhancing cross-national policy learning and transferability. It will also contribute to OECD trust and inclusive growth agendas, in response to the mandate provided by the OECD Ministers at the 2013 Ministerial Meeting. Finally, this report contributes to the OECD agenda on New Approaches to Economic Challenges and Prioritising Inclusive Growth by identifying policy levers to reduce rising inequality, restore growth and strengthen government performance.

Rationale for the study

The ability of countries to achieve inclusive growth and foster national competitiveness strongly depends on their capacity to mobilise and maximise the potential of human capital in the economy. Women make up half of this talent pool in any country. Indeed, strong evidence shows that greater gender equality in labour markets and education can contribute to economic growth, national happiness and well-being (OECD 2012). Furthermore, confidence in institutions – a key ingredient for a favourable investment climate and business development – strongly depends on the extent to which decision-makers reflect the composition of society, including in terms of gender. Finally, achieving inclusive and fair outcomes requires policy processes that are inclusive and that integrate the diverse perspectives of both men and women.

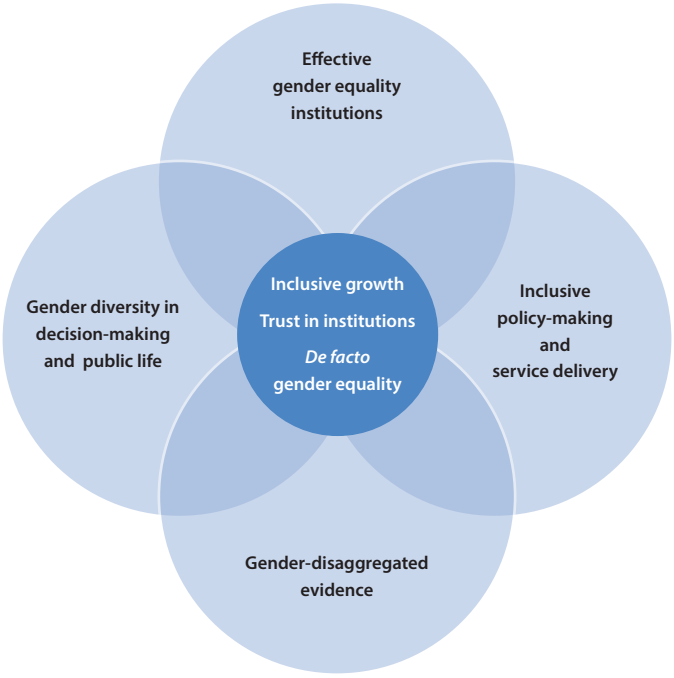
Over the last half-century, efforts to achieve more inclusive societies have made significant strides in closing gender gaps across OECD countries and worldwide. According to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2013*, the 135 countries covered in the report have closed almost 96% of the gap in health outcomes between men and women and almost 93% of the gap in educational attainment. In most OECD countries, women today are, on average, better educated than men, are making significant contributions to the economy as employees and entrepreneurs and enter political life in greater numbers (OECD, 2012). In the last 20 years, female labour force participation across OECD countries has risen from an average of 57.7% in 1990 to 64.9% in 2010 (OECD, 2012), with the public sector remaining the main employer of women. Changes in society are also reflected in political life, and it is becoming increasingly common for women to run for elected offices or preside in courts. However, the gap between women and men in economic participation and political empowerment remains wide: only 60% of the economic outcomes gap[1] and only 21% of the political outcomes gap have been closed (World Economic Forum, 2013). Disparities remain in access to education, employment and entrepreneurship, as well as access to social and political opportunities. For example, while women in OECD countries earn 15% less than men on average (OECD, 2013b), female top earners are paid 21% less than their male counterparts, while self-employed women frequently earn 30 to 40% less

than men (OECD, 2012). This gap is also present in the public sector. Women are still under-represented among public sector decision-makers in the legislature, the political executive, the courts and senior levels of administration.

Yet gender balance is particularly crucial in these institutions given that, unlike in the private sector, they are involved in making decisions, and creating and applying rules that affect people's rights, behaviours and life choices, influence the distribution of goods and services in society and determine access to public and private resources. As such, ensuring that decision-making bodies reflect the diversity of societies they represent (i.e. men and women, ethnic and other groups) can provide a balanced perspective on designing and implementing these rules and decisions, enabling an inclusive approach to developing public policies and services. In fact, balanced representation of men and women in decision making is critical to ensuring sustainability and viability of gender-sensitive and responsive public policies. Finally, governments also have an obligation to ensure equality of opportunity in the public service, allowing the government to act as a role model for other employers.

Closing the remaining gender gaps will be important for countries to drive national competitiveness, and achieve the resilience necessary for economies and societies to confront economic and social challenges. Governments play an important role in creating the right conditions for empowering women and enabling their access to opportunities across sectors, from health and education to employment and business development. This requires creating an effective gender-responsive policy and governance infrastructure (Figure 1.1); incorporating gender dimensions when designing and implementing policies across sectors and fostering gender-balanced decision-making. Yet, governments cannot and should not act alone. Involving other actors – including civil society, women's movements, businesses, women and men – in the policy and service-delivery processes is pivotal to generate the necessary evidence for developing inclusive and gender-responsive outputs.

Figure 1.1. **Key elements of gender-responsive policy and governance infrastructure**



Indeed, the success of all policies promoting gender equality in areas such as employment, education, entrepreneurship, housing, access to finance and beyond depends on the government's capacity to identify and integrate gender concerns in the policy process, based on robust gender-disaggregated evidence. This requires a strong institutional framework that can ensure that gender equality initiatives do not depend on the personalities and issues of the day. Sustainability of gender equality initiatives and inclusiveness of policy outcomes will only arise from public institutions where the diversity of women and men is sufficiently represented in decision-making, and which have clear roles and responsibilities, are equipped with gender-sensitive policy-making tools and processes and enable full citizen and civil society engagement. In fact, policy decisions that appear gender neutral may nonetheless have a detrimental impact on equal access to opportunities. Using tools and evidence that help governments better understand the impacts of their policies and programmes on men and women, as well as their needs, is key to inclusive policy-making.

Study objectives

This report aims to identify key trends across OECD countries and provide policy benchmarks on:

- *Women's access to leadership in the public domain, including the legislature, the judiciary and senior government positions*. Why does women's access to decision-making posts matter? What are the main opportunities and challenges in accessing top positions in these sectors? What are the successful practices in overcoming remaining barriers? What works, what does not and why?
- *Women in public employment*. While women are well-represented in public sectors across OECD countries, has parity been achieved? What gaps remain? Which policies are successful to achieve gender parity in the public workforce? What are the good practices and lessons learned? What can governments do to address the remaining challenges?
- *Institutional arrangements and mechanisms to embed gender considerations in government-wide policy making and service-delivery processes*. How can institutional frameworks be used to effectively promote a government-wide approach to advancing gender equality? How can the effectiveness of gender equality strategies be maximised? What tools can governments use to embed gender concerns into policy-making and service-delivery cycles? What capacities are needed to collect high-quality gender-disaggregated evidence and information to support decision-making?

This report provides a survey of existing practices across OECD countries enabling women's access to opportunities in public life – from public employment to top positions in parliaments, courts and the political executive – and describes institutional arrangements to enable effective implementation of gender equality strategies and reforms. In addition, it identifies good practices and lessons learned from OECD and partner countries and provides internationally comparable data and information on national gender policies. The report focuses primarily on gender balance in government and policy-making, including the three core branches of national governance systems: legislatures, judiciaries and executive branches (including the public administration). Where appropriate, references are made to women's participation in other public organisations, including trade unions and civil society organisations. Finally, the report outlines a number of policy recommendations that can provide a basis for the OECD Guidelines on Gender Equality in Public Life.

These guidelines would complement, reinforce and support the effective implementation of the 2013 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship by supporting member and partner countries in creating effective policy and institutional frameworks for advancing gender equality for inclusive growth.

Methodology and content

The report is based on:

- Surveys of OECD countries, including the OECD 2011 *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership* (22 countries responded); and the OECD 2011 *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*, which collected data and information on mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and institutions for the advancement of women in OECD countries, as well as on gender in public employment policies at the central-government level (22 countries responded). These surveys generated a new set of evidence on policy and institutional instruments for achieving gender balance in the public sector, integrating gender considerations into the policy and service-delivery processes and implementing a gender equality agenda.
- Over 25 interviews with parliamentarians, judges and legal experts from selected OECD countries to identify main barriers, opportunities, success factors and possible options for actions to close identified gaps in women's representation in public life (*2014 OECD Survey on Gender Equality in Public Life in OECD Countries*);
- Discussions on gender in public employment held during the meeting of the OECD Public Employment and Management Network on 23 October 2012;
- Academic and policy research to identify and analyse available data on women's access to decision making in public life, gender in public employment and the necessary institutional arrangements and policy mechanisms to promote gender equality; and
- Analysis of quota laws in OECD countries, in order to map key components and characteristics of quotas for women's representation in parliaments and to identify broader success factors and barriers to promoting gender equality in parliaments.

The report is structured as follows. Chapter 1 provides the rationale for the study, its objectives and the methodological approach to data collection. Chapter 2 reviews the trends and approaches to enable equal access to decision-making posts in the public domain across OECD countries for both men and women, including parliaments, the political executive, the judiciary and the senior civil service. Chapter 3 accounts for trends in public sector employment of women and highlights policy measures used in OECD countries to enable parity in the public sector. Chapter 4 highlights key institutional arrangements necessary for promoting *de facto* gender equality in a sustainable manner. It also reviews tools and approaches to enabling inclusive and gender-sensitive policy making in OECD countries, such as the use of gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessments. Examples from OECD partner countries are highlighted throughout the report. Finally, it assesses the availability of gender-disaggregated evidence across policy domains, explores challenges in data collection and identifies policy measures necessary to close remaining gaps.

Note

1. The World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report* provides a snapshot of where men and women stand with regard to some fundamental outcome indicators related to basic rights such as health, education, economic participation and political empowerment. The economic outcomes capture three concepts: the participation gap (the difference in labour force participation rates), the remuneration gap (ratio of estimated female-to-male earned income) and the advancement gap (the ratio of women to men among legislators, senior officials and managers and technical and professional workers). The political outcomes refer to the gap between men and women at the highest level of political decision making, through the ratio of women to men in minister-level and parliamentary positions.

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Chapter 2

Women's leadership in public life

This chapter highlights the current situation of women in public leadership positions in OECD countries and beyond. It describes women's representation in parliaments, executive cabinets, the judiciary and top civil servant positions. Overall, women remain underrepresented in the top echelons of public power, although there are considerable cross-country differences due to various historical and socio-economic factors. The chapter offers a detailed analysis of potential driving forces behind the lack of women in key decision-making posts. The analysis is based on existing literature, legal analysis and findings from the 2014 OECD Survey on Gender Equality in Public Life*, which involved interviews with parliamentarians, judges and legal experts. To address barriers to women's advancement, the chapter identifies a set of good practices and policy avenues that can support governments in improving the gender balance in senior positions in public life. The chapter concludes with policy recommendations on breaking the glass ceiling in public life.*

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Key findings

- Achieving inclusive policy outcomes strongly depends on whether policies reflect and integrate perspectives of diverse stakeholders, including both men and women. Gender balance at the decision-making level in public institutions is critical to ensure that public decisions and policies affecting rights, access to resources and distribution of power in society take into consideration the different needs and realities faced by the full diversity of women and men.
- Despite visible progress, women generally remain under-represented in key decision-making positions in politics and senior positions in judiciaries and public administrations.
- Working conditions such as long hours, unpredictable schedules and limited work-life balance arrangements (e.g. childcare facilities) are the main barriers hindering women's access to top positions in all public spheres.
- Workplace culture, i.e. perpetuating unconscious biases that may manifest themselves through the association of leadership and managerial roles with men rather than women, is another major barrier for women's advancement.
- The gender differences in career choices might be driven not only by differences in preferences, but also by working conditions, such as hours, of the various career routes towards senior decision-making posts, including in the judiciary.
- Many countries are enacting "positive discrimination" measures to correct for historical gaps in women's access to senior posts across the public domain. Complementary policy solutions – such as gender-sensitive parliaments, greater transparency in recruitment and appointment processes, leadership development and encouraging work-life balance for both male and female leaders – are also increasingly being introduced.
- Political commitment and an active role for political party leaders are essential to ensuring more gender equality in politics, although women's representation in parliaments also depends on the type of electoral system, voter preferences, access to finance and internal party dynamics.
- Introducing quotas in political life remains a debated issue. Even though quotas can increase female representation, they should serve as a transitional or correctional measure to reduce historical differences in representation. Quota effectiveness depends highly on the design of the quota and the country's electoral system.

Introduction

Achieving inclusive policy outcomes strongly depends on whether policies reflect and integrate perspectives of diverse stakeholders, including different groups of men and women. Indeed, there is increasing evidence that when public decision makers closely represent the societies they serve (e.g. gender and ethnically diverse groups, people with disabilities, aboriginal, indigenous or immigrant groups etc.) they enjoy greater public trust and bring attention to important socio-economic issues.[1]

Yet, despite the achievements made over the last half-century in creating more gender-equal societies, notable inequalities still exist, in particular, the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the public and private sectors. The data shows that increased representation in the economy and political life does not automatically lead to more women in senior positions. Women still face a "political glass ceiling" in the legislature and the political executive, and remain under-represented in senior judicial positions. Estimates suggest that countries with "first past the post" electoral systems and no quota arrangements will not reach 40% women in public office (indicated as the parity zone) until near the end of the 21st century (UNIFEM, 2009). A range of factors lead to these inequalities in political life, including cultural heritage and individual attitudes, the history of politics and inherited structures and traditions, women's position in the economy, and the level of activism of women's movements.

This chapter examines patterns of women's participation in the legislature, political executive, judiciary and senior civil service, and explores the remaining barriers to achieving equality in gender representation in the senior levels of public life.

Access to politics and the political executive

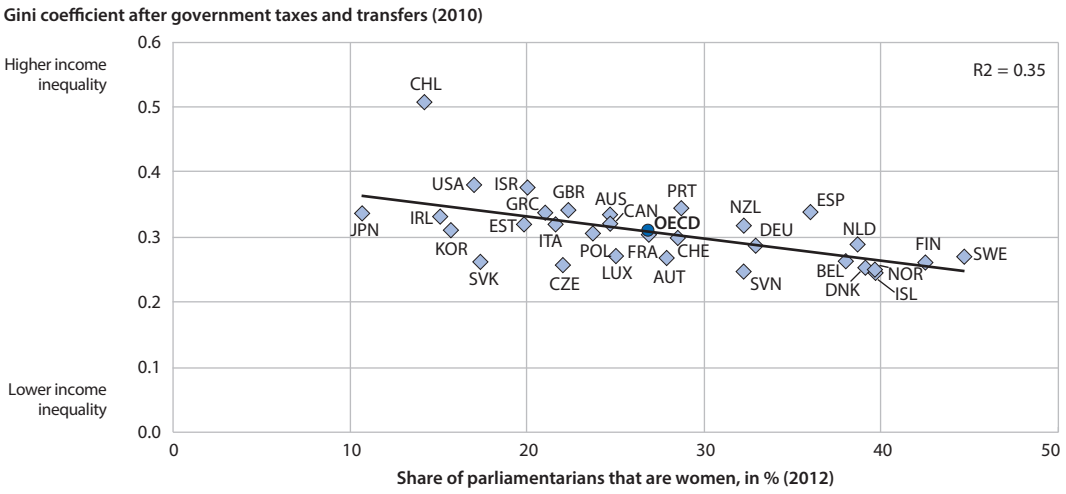
Women's political representation constitutes a core element of gender equality and democratic governance. Yet equal access to power, decision making and political leadership is not only a matter of fairness, democracy, and good governance; it can also have a positive impact on economic and social outcomes, delivering more equal and sustainable growth and development.

There is increasing evidence that – given the current economic climate and social and demographic changes – equal political opportunities for men and women are essential pre-requisites for building greater resilience to future crises, and achieving strong and sustainable growth and development that benefits all. Greater gender balance among politicians encourages inclusiveness in policy making and bolsters trust in government.

Systematic exclusion of half of the population wastes the talents and insights of some of its most able citizens. Empowering women and fully leveraging their skills and leadership in the global economy, politics and society are fundamental to maximising a nation's competitiveness, as diverse leadership is more likely to find innovative solutions to foster *inclusive growth* (Schwab and Zahini, 2011) that shares its benefits across all social groups. Taking women's potential to foster stronger and more equitable economies into account is especially important within the current economic environment.

In fact, the data shows a relationship between the representation of women in parliaments and levels of inequality in OECD countries, pointing to lower levels of inequality in countries with a greater share of women among top decision-makers in legislatures (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. **Women in key decision-making positions and income inequality in OECD countries**



Note: Gini coefficient: Data for Chile, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand and Switzerland are for 2009. Share of parliamentarians that are women: data refer to share of women parliamentarians recorded as of 31 October 2012. Percentages represent the number of women parliamentarians as a share of total filled seats in the lower or single house of parliament.

Source: OECD Income Distribution Database and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), PARLINE (database).

While the direct impact of gender equality on socio-economic outcomes is difficult to measure, there is evidence that it significantly contributes to poverty reduction (World Bank Group, 2012) and economic growth through more equal educational outcomes (OECD, 2012). Studies also show that groups with a greater proportion of women are more likely to make decisions that reflect both the preferences of the group and of the larger population, producing more democratic outcomes (Hannagan and Larimer, 2009). Indeed, there is evidence that, as members of legislative bodies, women are more likely to advocate for changes that promote the interests of women, children and families and support public welfare in areas such as health care and education (Moccia and Anthony, 2006; Paxton et al., 2007; Wängnerud, 2009; Chen, 2010; Atchison and Down, 2009). Women politicians often bring particular attention to such issues as gender-based violence, family-friendly policies, responsiveness to citizen needs (Cammisa and Reingold, 2004), increased co-operation across party and ethnic lines (Rosenthal, 2001) and more sustainable peace in post-conflict reconstruction (Chinkin, 2003).[2] Moreover, the presence of women in parliaments can influence the introduction of a more gender-sensitive budget. This is also recognised by women Members of Parliament (MPs):

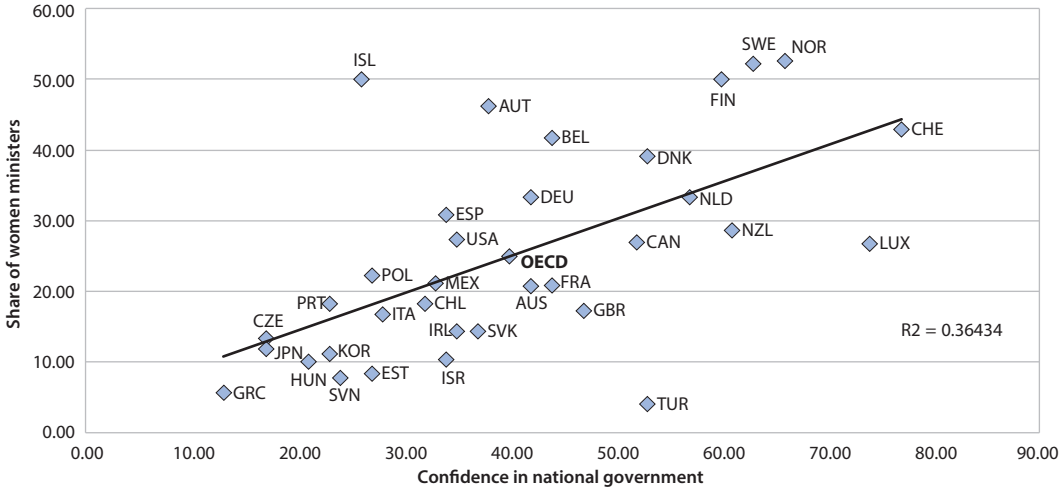
> "Given different experiences in life, women bring forward new issues into the political agenda such as policies that help to combine work and family" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

> "There is not a masculine or feminine way of doing politics but based on their experiences, women tend to put on the parliamentary agenda social, gender equality and education issues more than men do" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

> "The different perspectives and style of men and women add to the strength and quality of decisions made" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

An increased presence of women cabinet ministers was associated with a rise in public health spending across a large sample of countries in the year 2000 (Mavisakalyan, 2012; Rehavi, 2007). Data also shows a relationship between women ministers and confidence in national governments (see Figure 2.2). In Switzerland, women policy makers register higher approval rates for allocating funds to environmental protection, public health, equal rights for men and women, unemployment and social security provisions as compared to male policy makers. Conversely, research has shown that women are less likely to support nuclear energy or military spending (Funk and Gathmann, 2010).

Figure 2.2. **Women ministers and confidence in national governments in OECD countries (2012)**



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union and Gallup databases.

Women in parliaments: a snapshot

By the beginning of the 21st century, most countries across the world had granted women the right to vote and the right to stand for election (Ramirez et al. 1997). The few remaining countries have also moved toward female suffrage in recent years. Women obtained the right to vote in Oman in 2003, in Kuwait in 2005, and in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in 2006. Women's suffrage contributed to an increase in female political participation and in the female share of registered voters across the globe. Today, in countries such as Barbados, Chile, Ecuador, Malta, Puerto Rico, Sweden and the United States there is a higher voter turnout among women than men.

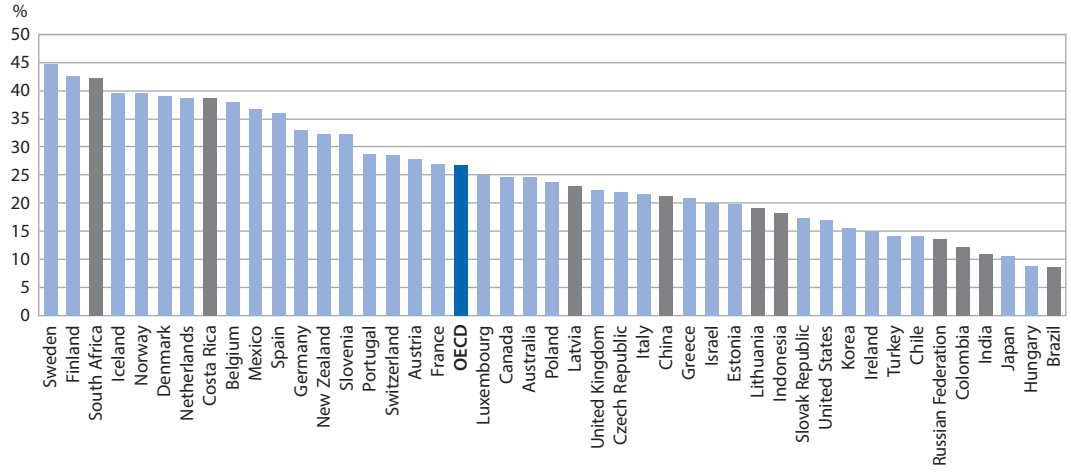
Despite visible progress in economic and political life, women are still under-represented in political leadership positions. While women are able to rise to the pinnacle of political power (as seen, for example, in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Finland, Germany and Lithuania), today only 16 women are Heads of State or Government and only 21% of legislators around the globe are women. Women occupy only 14.9% of the total number of posts of presidents of parliament and hold approximately 20% of all cabinet positions worldwide (World Bank Group, 2012).

Although there is a wide range of women's parliamentary participation, on average across the OECD, women hold one-quarter of ministerial positions and occupy only 27% of

seats in lower/single parliaments (which is higher than the world average of 21.8%, but only by several percentage points). Even though this is an increase from 2002, when the share of women was 20%, only 15 member countries reach or exceed the 30% threshold for the representation of women recommended by the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, beyond which women are considered to have a critical mass to influence legislative outcomes. The share of women in OECD parliaments is generally highest in Nordic countries, with nearly 40% or more seats held by women in Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Norway. In Turkey, Japan, Chile and Hungary, women hold less than 15% of seats. It is also important to assess gender balance among speakers, and presidents of standing committees or parliamentary groups, to understand women's share of power within the parliament. According to the International Parliamentary Union, only 39 women preside over one house of the 188 parliaments, 78 of which are bicameral. Women therefore occupy only 14.3% of the total 273 posts of presiding officer of parliament or of one of its houses (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013).

Among OECD partner countries, South Africa and Costa Rica lead with a female share of 42% and 38.6% of parliamentarians, respectively, whereas India (11%) and Brazil (9%) are at the lower end of the distribution. The share of women parliamentarians in China (23%) is approaching the OECD average, but in the Russian Federation (14%) and Indonesia (19%), it remains lower (see Figure 2.3). Even though the average female share is low in the Arab states, there are encouraging advancements in the MENA region (e.g. Tunisia and Algeria). Female representation in the UAE's Federal National Council now sits at 22.5%, and Saudi Arabia recently announced the extension of the vote to women. At the local level, women also tend to have low representation, with about one-tenth of mayoralties and less than one-fourth of local council seats in both Latin America and Europe (World Bank Group, 2012).

Figure 2.3. **Share of women parliamentarians (lower or single house of parliament), OECD and partner countries (2012)**



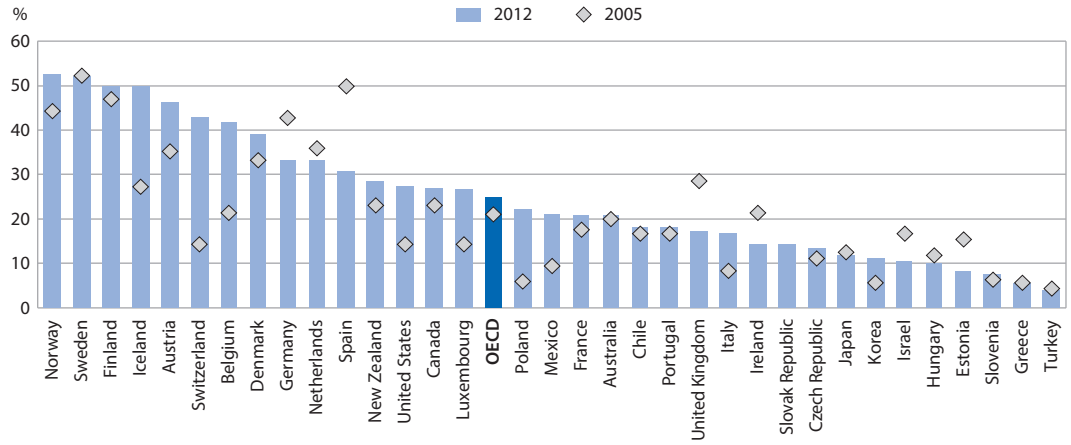
Note: Percentages represent the number of women parliamentarians as a share of total filled seats. Bars highlighted in grey represent OECD accession, key partner and other partner countries.

Source: OECD (2013), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on Inter-Parliamentary Union, PARLINE database.

Women as ministers: a snapshot

Although the ministerial appointment process differs depending on a country's political system (parliamentary voting or appointments, versus presidential appointments with or without parliamentary approval), women are not represented equally in any system. In the political executives of OECD countries, the average percentage of women ministers increased only slightly from 21% in 2005 to 25% in 2012. Data from 2012 show that the share of female ministers ranges from over 50% in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland to less than 10% in Hungary, Estonia, Slovenia, Greece and Turkey (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4. **Share of women ministers (2005 and 2012)**



Note: Data represent women who had been appointed ministers as of 1 January 2012 and 1 January 2005. Data for total includes Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers. Prime Ministers/Heads of Government who held ministerial portfolios were also included. Vice Presidents and heads of governmental or public agencies are not included.

Source: OECD (2013), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on IPU "Women in Politics" Posters, 2012 and 2005.

In OECD partner countries, women's representation within the political executive also varies. In South Africa, the share of women ministers is 39%, about 30% in Latvia, only 10% in India, and only one woman minister in Russia.

When comparing the share of women in parliament and cabinet across OECD countries, a similar set of countries falls at the higher and lower ends of the distributions: the Nordic countries are at the top whereas Hungary, Turkey and Japan remain at the lower end of both distributions. As for the other countries, the relationship between the share of women in parliament and among ministers is not evident. Even though access to the highest ranks of executive leadership is often a consequence of parliamentary experience in many countries, a country's rank in terms of women's representation in parliament cannot be used as a predictor for the number of women ministers. The form of the political regime also does not clearly indicate the prevalence of women in the executive or in parliament. For example, countries with a parliamentary regime are found among both the lowest (e.g. Japan, India, Hungary) and highest ranks (e.g. Sweden, Finland, South Africa) in terms of women's representation in the political executive in Figure 2.3 and throughout the whole spectrum in Figure 2.4. The same applies to countries with a presidential government system. This suggests that appointments and elections of women into positions of power depend not only on political context and the strategies of individual political leaders, but also on informal appointment rules.

The appointment of women to cabinet posts does not necessarily signal dramatic shifts in gendered patterns of political power; rather, it depends on which cabinet posts women assume and the power and prestige associated with those portfolios. Research on European cabinets indicates that the portfolios allocated to women often reflect the educational and occupational categories which women usually choose. Hence, women still tend to be allocated to ministerial portfolios deemed more "feminine" (Krook and O'Brien, 2011). For example, women ministers are twice as likely to hold a social portfolio as an economic one (World Bank Group, 2012). While there is no formal hierarchy in cabinet portfolios, it is universally considered that finance and foreign affairs (where women are least represented) are the two most prestigious portfolios (Buckley and Galligan, 2011). The allocation of ministerial portfolios in traditionally feminine areas might also be, in part, a result of public opinion. Research conducted in the United States and Canada found that the public considers women and men to be competent in different policy areas (Jalalzai and Tremblay, 2011).

Recently, several countries have established parity cabinets (e.g. by Chilean President Michelle Bachelet in 2006, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero in 2004 and 2008, and by the French Government of François Hollande in 2012). Moreover, in 2010, the percentage of women in the Swiss government was 57%. Similarly, three of the last four appointees to the powerful position of Secretary of State for the United States were women (Krook and O'Brien, 2011). In South Africa, the provincial government of Gauteng is also placing gender parity within decision making as a policy priority (see Box 2.1). The level of acceptance of a parity cabinet may differ across countries. Depending on the broader political context in which the original parity cabinet emerges, female cabinet ministers can face either co-operation or a hostile attitude from male political elites. For example, it was easier to build and ensure acceptance of a gender-balanced cabinet in Spain than in Chile because of weaker resistance to this issue by the political elites, as the parity cabinet emerged with extensive support within the prime minister's party. In Chile, however, gender parity in the cabinet had less support within the governing political parties; it was seen as a personal initiative of the president (Franceschet and Thomas, 2013). Indeed, the second government of President Bachelet formed in 2014 did not succeed in reaching parity.

Barriers hindering greater gender balance in parliaments and political life

There are several factors that may determine the share of women entering and staying in decision-making positions. Some of the main ones are highlighted below.

Candidate supply and uneven access to financing

A common argument for the uneven representation of women in decision making is the lack of potential female candidates, given that, historically, women have not been running for office. However, OECD interviews with parliamentarians revealed that, in most countries, it is often not the lack of able women, but rather the economic inequality between men and women and limited opportunities for women to exhibit their skills that perpetuate their uneven representation. Women mostly remain under-represented in high-status professions in OECD countries and beyond (OECD, 2012), which often limits their visibility. In order to be elected to office, one needs to be eligible and included in the pool of potential candidates. Just like men, women can get involved in politics through youth organisations, enter politics after particular occupational achievements or extensive involvement in

Box 2.1. Gender parity in parliaments and cabinets

Gauteng Province, South Africa

The **South Africa** Gauteng Province strives to create a provincial government that is representative of the people it serves. Currently, the Premier of Gauteng is a woman, five of the ten members of the province's Executive Council are women, and there is a growing representation of women of the senior public service management level. The Gauteng Legislature is constitutionally mandated to exercise oversight over governmental performance concerning policies and plans through the Gender, Youth, and Disability Committee (GEYODI committee). The committee works with the Treasury Department and the Office of the Premier in order to monitor budget votes, advise on penalties and, where necessary, enforce implementation.

The new Gauteng Policy Framework on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment was developed to ensure the equal representation of women and men in government, mainstreaming of gender issues into the policy-making process and equal education and employment opportunities for men and women in Gauteng. In particular, the Gauteng Policy Framework stipulates, "women and men shall be equitably represented in decision-making structures of the Gauteng Provincial Government, departments, and agencies community structures and stakeholder forums with a target for 50/50 representation". Moreover, departments within the government are tasked to appoint Gender Focal Points and Units responsible for co-ordinating gender mainstreaming and for developing women's empowerment programmes. Departments with dedicated Gender Units have experienced improved mainstreaming and gained reasonable influence in the co-ordination of gender programmes. In support of the overall Gauteng Policy Framework, the government developed a Programme of Action, which has an outcome-based approach with indicators for different government activities. Outcomes shall be reported on an annual basis, which will help track each programme's progress.

Source: Gauteng Provincial Government (2010), *Strategic Policy Framework on Gender and Equality and Women Empowerment, and Making Gauteng an even Better Place for Women*, www.gautengonline.gov.za.

The French Cabinet

The year 2012 saw significant gains for women in **French** political decision making: 27% women in Parliament and 50% in government. The new president honoured his promise to have gender parity in government, including an equal number of women and men in the Cabinet. Moreover, the Ministry of Women's Rights was revived, and junior women were included in government, providing a potential pipeline of women leaders. Nonetheless, the responsibilities allocated to men and women were certainly not the same. Women found themselves in the more "feminine" posts such as Social Affairs and Health, Culture and Communication, Senior Citizens, Families, and Disabled People (with the exception of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of the Reform of the State and Decentralisation). However, the parity in the Cabinet did not hold for long since within the first year, one of the female ministers was replaced.

Even though France is not the first country to have a parity government, it has a long-standing tradition of having more women in its government than in its Parliament. While many ministers are drawn from Parliament, it is possible for presidents to appoint ministers without prior political experience. As a result, several presidents were able to elevate little-known women into government positions – a practice known as the "fait du prince". There are obvious advantages to such promotions, which allow more women to enter politics. Yet there are also risks, since such positions can easily be withdrawn, and women who lack their own autonomous power base are likely to depend more on presidential patronage (Murray, 2013).

Source: Murray, R. (2013), "Towards Parity Democracy? Gender in the 2012 French Legislative Elections", *Parliamentary Affairs,* 66, pp. 197-212.

community work. Yet, whichever entrance path is taken, potential candidates need to be visible to their community. The experiences of interviewed MPs confirm this:

> "Having the opportunity to be visible through your work and participate in radio and television debates is crucial for becoming an MP" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

In addition, going into politics can be an expensive undertaking; since women have less access to funding and financial networks, they may be inclined to be less involved.

Perceived lack of work-life balance

The lack of women in the candidacy pool may also be a result of deliberate choices made by women to opt out of high-ranking careers, due to the perceived lack of work-life balance (O'Brien, 2005, and Murray-Smith, 2004). Even though social expectations of women and their role in the household are changing and men are increasingly involved in unpaid family responsibilities, women remain the primary caregivers in families. Professional demands – but also uneven work-life balance policies – might make it especially hard for women to be active in the economic and political life during their childbearing and childrearing years.

Indeed, women MPs from a range of countries continuously stated that it is difficult to combine family responsibilities with a career as a top politician, especially when caring for younger children (OECD, 2014). For example, at the entry level of the political career, meetings of political parties' local branches take place late in the evenings, making it difficult for parents (and mainly mothers as primary caretakers) to attend. Moreover, if decisions are made during informal meetings, this reduces the opportunity for women, who have either family commitments or are not part of the male networks, to be included in the decision-making process. This might also discourage women from continuing in politics and partly explain the higher attrition rate of women before they even formally join a political party. Arranging party meetings at earlier hours, but also preparing meeting agendas beforehand, can facilitate greater and more active participation of women (OECD, 2014).

In most countries the working hours of parliamentarians are difficult to predict and voting times are not known in advance, making it difficult to organise one's private life. Parliamentarians from remote constituencies face particular challenges, since they have to spend the working week in the capital and only return home for several days at a time. If leave provisions and childcare facilities are not provided, it becomes particularly difficult for mothers with young children (and specifically single mothers) to start or continue a political career. Even if childcare facilities are available, their working hours are usually incompatible with parliament session times. Hence, parents aiming to continue their political careers often rely on informal care arrangements. As one MP put it:

> "You can never become a politician if you do not have the backup and support of your family" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

Limited political encouragement

A US study which surveyed more than 2 100 college students between the ages of 18 and 25 showed that young women are less likely than young men to have considered running for office, to express interest in a candidacy at some point in the future or to consider elective office a desirable profession. The study also found that this gender gap

is comparable to the one found in studies of potential candidates already working in the feeder professions to politics. The study identified five factors that contribute to the gender gap in political ambition among college students:

1. Young men are more likely than young women to be socialised by their parents to think about politics as a career path.
2. From their school experiences to their peer associations to their media habits, young women tend to be exposed to less political information and discussion than young men.
3. Young men are more likely than young women to have played organised sports and care about winning.
4. Young women are less likely than young men to receive encouragement to run for office – from anyone.
5. Young women are less likely than young men to think they will be qualified to run for office, even once they are established in their careers (Lawless and Fox, 2013).

Such a gap in political ambition and fewer women "putting themselves forward" in politics may perpetuate the existing gender misbalance in political representation. As one MP put it: "[young] women might not be necessarily aware of the distance they can go and the degree of influence they have over shaping their careers" (OECD, 2014). Encouragement from parents, family members, teachers and coaches to think about a political career and introducing women to competitive environments can re-inforce their interest in running for future public office (Lawless and Fox, 2013).

Internal party dynamics and gender stereotypes

On the demand side, the existing political system, internal party dynamics and the level of commitment to a gender balance within parties may also influence women's representation in politics. The powerful elites may be reluctant to field women in electable positions (Sanbonmatsu, 2002 and 2006; Bagues and Esteve-Volart, 2009) because of stereotyping or statistical discrimination. Since there are fewer female leaders, information about their performance and productivity might be imprecise or insufficient. Such statistical judgement (be it the result of stereotypes or of asymmetrical information) may be self-perpetuating. The MPs participating in the study stressed that women may be discouraged from pursuing political careers by the perception that standards and qualifications applied to women are more stringent, and that their chances of moving into leadership positions are low.

> "The words of a woman MP are more scrutinised than those of men MPs, and women's errors are judged harsher than those of men" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

> "During the election campaigns, the active engagement of women might be perceived as 'too forward' or aggressive and not consistent with how a woman should be behaving" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

With few female political leaders acting as role models, women may believe that politics is a high-risk undertaking suitable only for men, and hold back from political careers. These views are often reinforced by the media, which tend to portray politics as a "male-dominated sport" and as "aggressive and oppositional". There is also sometimes a greater focus on the personal lives and physical appearance of female candidates (OECD, 2014).

Voter preferences

Parties with greater male presence may oppose female candidacies because women may be regarded as less able to attract voters. Even though some voters might believe that women are less competent as policy makers, this voter preference can stem from incomplete information. For instance, Dufflo and Topalova (2004), and Beaman et al. (2009) found evidence that Indian male voters prefer male politicians. However, they also find that discriminatory preferences dissipate with better knowledge of the candidate. Voter preferences are usually a result of long-standing socio-cultural beliefs. Since men have historically been more active in the political arena, some voters may still perceive women as less politically apt than men. Yet, most MPs surveyed across OECD countries felt that "they do not suffer from negative stereotypes" from the public, which is often "ahead of the game in supporting women in parliament" and, in some cases, the public accepts "hard facts" more readily from a woman politician than from a man politician (OECD, 2014). Moreover, in some countries the public is much more likely to vote for the party or the chair of the party rather than "make any special reference to its composition or share of women on the party list". Interestingly, a US study on gender gaps in voting found that women voters on average do vote for women slightly more than men do, but it does not happen automatically: "The extent of support a woman candidate receives from women voters will depend on the candidate, her campaign, her opponent, the composition and mood of the electorate, and the political climate. Women are slightly more likely to vote for women candidates but they do not vote as a bloc; like men voters, they make their decisions based on a wide variety of factors" (Newman, 1996).

Pathways for women into legislative policymaking

While a range of factors influences women's representation in politics – including historical under-representation, the nature of the political system and the broader socio-economic context – many OECD countries are working actively to close gender gaps in the political participation of women, restore declining trust in public institutions and address widening inequality. Indeed, when parliaments resemble the populations they represent, government is better able to maintain legitimacy and public trust. The economic crisis has been mentioned by a number of surveyed MPs as the "window of opportunity" to get into politics: "The crisis has changed the public policy making: voters are more sceptical towards the "old boys club" and are welcoming new perspectives" (OECD, 2014).

In addition, given that women may vote more for women (depending on the platform, candidate, her opponent and other factors) and that some country-level research indicates that women increasingly tend to vote more than men (e.g. in the recent US elections, voter turnout rates for women have equalled or exceeded voter turnout rates for men[3]), women's representation among candidates may serve as a source of new votes for parties. Indeed European data showed that more women candidates resulted in higher levels of interest among women voters and a higher likelihood of women voting in European Parliament elections. European countries with quotas had 8% more women candidates, which increased the probability of women voting in those countries.[4]

Some of the steps taken by OECD countries to correct for historical representation gaps and increase gender balance in legislatures include introducing legislative or voluntary party quotas, reserving seats for women, making parliaments more family friendly and strengthening women's leadership capacities and access to necessary resources.

Electoral system

Political structures play a significant role in women's recruitment to parliament. Evidence shows that women tend to be more successful under proportional representation (PR) list systems and that majority systems result in lower numbers of women elected.

The results show that 13 of the top 15 countries in terms of women's representation in parliament are countries with PR systems, and all these countries have a share of women of over 30% (the range is between 38% and 56%). Moreover, in 2012, proportional representation systems across the globe showed 25% of women in parliament, 17% in mixed systems and 14% in majority systems (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013a). In New Zealand, a country where the electoral system has changed from a single-member district plurality to a mixed-member proportional voting system, the percentage of women MPs grew from 16.5% in 1990 to 21.2% in 1993 immediately after the change, jumping to 29% in 1996 (Norris, 2006).

In a majoritarian system, only one official represents each district, and the person who gets the most votes wins the seat. It is a much more difficult system for women candidates seeking election since political parties often prefer to nominate men, who are seen as safer bets due to higher public visibility and more years of political experience within the party. For example, in the United States Congress, which uses a majoritarian system, women hold only 14% of seats.

Under the PR system, however, the seats are divided among parties based on the overall percentage of votes each party wins. Hence, more than one official is elected in each multi-member district. This provides more opportunities for women to be elected. The more seats, the more potential for women to be elected. That is, under PR systems, parties have considerable incentives to create a balanced list of candidates reflecting a variety of stakeholders – to avoid any electoral penalties from the appearance of discrimination against any particular group.

It is easier to introduce candidate or voluntary party quotas into the PR system, given that quotas require candidate lists to have a certain proportion of women, which increases their chances of being elected. Quotas are most effective where there are large electoral districts and where there are requirements that women's names be spaced evenly on lists. In simple plurality systems, measures to reserve seats for women have been preferred over quotas.

There are still considerable variations in the representation of women within each major electoral family, which points to other factors at play. These may include political culture, the party system, or the level of democratic development of the countries. In addition, there is a trend in political systems to favour incumbents, which may also make it difficult for women to enter the politics as candidates, given their historical under-representation.

Gender quotas

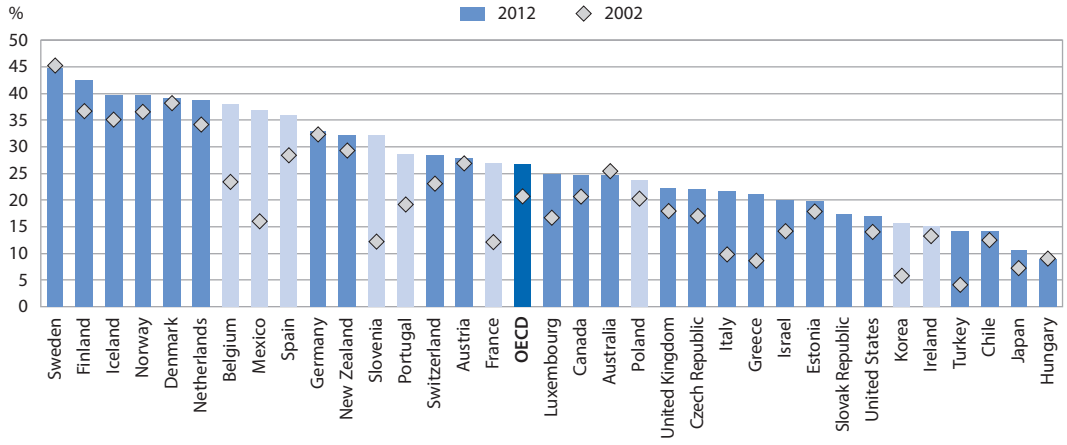
Gender quotas emerged over the past two decades as an (often temporary) means for increasing women's political representation to close historical imbalances, as well as correct for or prevent rollbacks in gender equality. Quotas can be classified in two main categories: *i)* the selection and reservation of candidates, ensuring that a set minimum number of female candidates are elected (voluntary party quotas and legislated gender quotas); and *ii)* the reservation of seats, ensuring that a given number of women are elected. These systems can be mandated by the constitution or electoral laws or adopted by parties on a voluntary basis. Quotas can be formulated either as a minimum requirement or a set target, or framed in a gender-neutral way (for example, a maximum of 40% of either

gender). The ordering of women and men on party lists may also be specified, as well as penalties for non-compliance with legislative quotas. As reported by the Quota Project, over 80 countries globally use voluntary party quotas or legislated candidate quotas, and 18 countries use reserved seats.

Of those countries that currently have gender quotas, 61% use voluntary party quotas (often in combination with other types), 38% have legislated candidate quotas and 20% have reserved seats (Pande and Ford, 2011). While the causality is not simple, data show that half of the countries with women's political representation at or above 30% use either legislated candidate quotas or reserved seats for women (www.quotaproject.org). According to the Quota Project Database, in countries with only voluntary party quotas, the proportion of women in parliament ranges from 8% (Botswana) to 45% (Sweden). Over one-quarter (precisely 27%) of these 34 countries (with only voluntary quotas) have at least 30% of women occupying parliamentary seats.

Across OECD countries, only legislated gender quotas or voluntary party quotas are used. Figure 2.5 depicts in light blue lower or single house parliaments in OECD countries with legislated candidate quotas as of January 2013.

Figure 2.5. **Share of women parliamentarians (lower or single house of parliament) and legislated gender quotas (2012 and 2002)**



Note: Bars in light blue represent countries with lower or single-house parliaments with legislated candidate quotas as of 21 January 2013. Percentages represent the number of women parliamentarians as a share of total filled seats.

Source: OECD (2013), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on data on gender quotas obtained from the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) Global Database on Quotas for Women, Inter-Parliamentary Union, PARLINE database.

The following sections examine different quota systems more closely.

Legislated gender quotas

The legislated candidate quota system is used in a number of OECD countries and beyond to fast-track women's access to political decision making in order to close historical gaps, given that women have been significantly under-represented in parliaments. This system can also be used to correct for or to prevent any equality rollbacks, which may happen as a result of political changes. This quota type, established by the constitution or electoral laws, reserves a number of places on electoral lists for female candidates.

There are mixed reactions to legislated quotas among politicians and the public across OECD countries. First, quotas are sometimes seen as interfering with the electoral process and undermining parties' ability to decide on a suitable representation. According to some of the interviewed MPs:

> "Quota provisions go against democratic notions and undermine women's abilities. There should not be a defined formula supporting the proportion of men and women in parliament, rather the socio-economic conditions need to be made such as to allow both men and women to participate in a country's decision-making process" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

> "Quotas might also initiate a bigger divide between men and women and prevent them from competing against each other on the same pitch" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

> "Parties should decide on their representation, and it is up to the voters who should decide whether to vote on a party with women or with no women on their lists" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

Next, quotas alone might have limiting effects in a patriarchal society, especially if the quota law does not include penalties for parties that fail to meet the quota, or if there is no provision for concrete support for female candidates (such as public campaign funds). Depending on the social and political climate within a country, the quota might discourage political parties from creating other mechanisms to encourage women's political development and education. As well, some MPs appointed through quotas reported feeling prejudice from colleagues that they "got," but did not "earn" their places in parliament, especially in the beginning of their careers. Although this perception can be overcome with time, it adds additional pressure on women "to prove themselves" to their male colleagues. However, some MPs noted that once a woman is an MP, the quota is "no longer important and, besides, political parties tend to include those people on the list who are likely to be elected" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

Finally, there is also a concern that the quota system allows insufficiently qualified women to be elected. Indeed, there are many women who insist on election based on merit. At the same time, it is unlikely that women's under-representation is primarily a result of an insufficient supply of qualified candidates, given the usually significant gap between the number of women in politics, and women in the labour force and in management positions. Therefore, quotas could serve as a transitional measure to correct for historic gender imbalances, although quota laws should not be forced too early. Quotas, if introduced, should mainly serve as transitional or correctional measures to close gaps in female representation or to prevent rollback in women's representation. Indeed, even though most of the MPs interviewed across OECD countries argue that there should be "no interference into the selection of party candidates", some admit that in certain cases "a temporary quota might be needed to make things happen" (*A parliamentarian from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

In cases where the low representation of women in politics is due, at least partially, to statistical discrimination or the reluctance of political parties to promote women, temporary quota systems may allow women to demonstrate their skills and may induce the electorate to vote for them in future elections (Dasgupta and Asgari, 2004). Having more women may also attract more female voters, although this would depend on the candidate, the platform and the political climate (Newman, 1996). For instance, the Indian case demonstrates that quotas increase female leadership by reducing gender discrimination in the long term (Pande and Ford, 2011) and weakening stereotypes about gender roles (Beaman at al, 2009). Furthermore, elections in parliament usually take place every four to

five years; hence, opportunities to make progress towards more gender-balanced decision making are relatively infrequent.

In Ireland, the quota law was adopted recently (in 2012) following several years of discussions and lobbying by its supporters. The law stipulates that political parties will lose 50% of their state funding unless at least 30% of their candidates are women. The required quota will reach 40% in the 2019 election. In Belgium, the quota was introduced gradually, which makes it harder to capture its overall effect. After the introduction of the law for the first time in 1994 (target 25%), however, the increase was from 18% to 23%. In 2002, the law was changed to require an equal number of men and women. One of the two highest positions on the lists was reserved for a woman candidate and non-compliance penalties were introduced. The first use of the amended quota was for the 2007 federal elections, and in 2009 for regional and European parliament elections. By 2010, the share of women MPs reached 39.3%. (For more information see Box 2.2.)

Box 2.2. **Examples of quota laws**

Belgium

The Belgian example shows the gradual evolution of the quota law in response to its effectiveness in increasing the number of women in Parliament. In Belgium, the quota laws for the presence of women on candidate lists were introduced after general advertising campaigns failed (Meier 2004; Celis and Meier 2006). The first quota legislation, introduced in 1994, required a minimum threshold of 25% women on the candidacy list. For the 1999 election, the quota had no placement mandate or enforcement mechanisms; still, the share of women in Parliament increased after the election. This was partly due to pressure from women's groups, which led many parties to nominate women to electable positions (Matland, 2006). The quota law was amended in 2002 to increase the threshold of women's representation on party ballots to 50%. Moreover, the new law required that the top two candidates not be of the same gender. If a party fails to comply with the gender composition requirements, the electoral authorities will refuse their list. Equal visibility of men's and women's names on the ballot, parity among candidates and strict non-compliance measures were important factors in increasing the share of women in Parliament. However, even though the number of women in Parliament increased, the female share has stalled within the 35-39% range for the past few years. This might be influenced by the existing electoral list system of the country.

Interestingly, Belgium has a flexible list system: voters have the choice between casting a preferential vote for one or more candidates and casting a list vote. In addition, a recent electoral reform halved the impact of the list votes on the allocation of seats to candidates, weakening the advantage of higher-ranked candidates. It has been observed that more and more voters cast preferential list votes (Wauters et al., 2010). Hence, one can suggest that the proportion of women in Parliament reflects voters' preferences towards the candidates presented on the party lists.

Brazil

Brazil was one of the first countries to introduce gender quotas and has been actively aiming to bridge the gap in gender political representation for almost two decades. In 1996, the first lists of proportional representation candidacies were introduced at the equivalent of local-level legislative power and initially the minimum gender quota was set at 20%. Mandatory quotas began to be applied in 1998 at the federal and regional levels, and the minimum quota for each gender rose to 25%. The smaller parties had higher percentages of female candidacies in the state context but none of the parties observed the quotas. The results were insufficient between 1996 and 2000 and far less than the minimum established percentage, with none of the 30 officially registered political parties managing to observe the minimum quota (Araújo 2003). The gender quota then rose to 30% in 2000 (Ibid), and by this stage the achieved index was 19.2% of the total.

Box 2.2. **Examples of quota laws** *(continued)*

In 2012, a law came into effect that forced political parties to ensure that 30% of candidates were women (Della Barba, 2012). Furthermore, the law now also requires 30% of candidates for city council positions to be women (Elizondo, 2012). As a result, female participation in municipal elections rose 85% between the 2008 elections and the 2012 elections. Of the 5 323 mayoral candidates in the country, 12% were women. Of the local council candidates running nationwide in the 2012 election, 32% were female, which was a 10% increase from 2008. Furthermore, a September 2009 amendment to the legislation requires parties to allocate at least 10% of advertising and 5% of public campaign funding to promote women's participation in the political sphere. In 2013, Brazil saw the largest number of women enter local office in their history, with 665 women elected as mayors in 5 000 municipalities (Bueno, 2013). If Brazil is to have higher levels of gender equality in its political representation, the law needs to be taken even further so that a quota of 30% is required for parliamentary seats and not just candidacy spots. While Brazil's quota laws could be stronger and their success has not been as great as many other countries in the region, the results indicate that the situation has steadily improved with the implementation of gender quotas.

Sources: Araújo, C. (2008) "Quotas for Women in the Brazilian Legislative System", Paper Presented at International Idea Workshop, Peru, 23-24 February 2003; Bueno, N. (2013) "Representation by law? Gender quotas in Brazil's elections", http://thesmokefilledroomblog.com/2013/01/08/representation-by-law-gender-quotas-in-brazils-elections (accessed 10/02/2014); Della Barba, M. (2012), "Brazil local elections push women to the fore", BBC News; Elizondo, G. (2012), "Women candidates to the fore at Brazil ballot", Aljazeera.

The Portuguese Parity Act also pushed the share of female parliamentarians upwards, from just over 20% in 2005 to 27.4% in 2009 (Baum and Espirito-Santo, 2012). The quota proposal, passed in 2006 mainly due to the Socialist Party's majority in Parliament, required candidate lists for elections to the national Parliament, the European Parliament and local government to include a minimum of 33% of each gender. The penalty for non-compliance is reduction in campaign funding, and rank placement on the lists is mandatory. In Spain, the Equality Law passed in 2007 required a minimum of 40% female candidates, and stipulated that parties that did not comply would not be registered. The share of women in Parliament increased from 28.3% in 2000 to 36.6% in 2010. In Argentina, which has a proportional electoral system with a closed list,[5] the law on quotas (introduced in 1991) required all parties to nominate women to 30% of electable positions on their lists of candidates. The law brought about an evident change: the proportion of women MPs increased from 6% before to 27% after the law came into effect (Norris, 2006).

Yet, the introduction of a quota law does not guarantee that women will be elected to parliament. As Figure 1.3 shows, the proportion of women varies for countries with candidate quotas from about 15.7% in Korea to 37% in Belgium. Countries without a mandated quota system (either those who use voluntary quotas or no quotas) also show a high variation in female representation in parliament, from 9% in Hungary to nearly 45% in Sweden.

Among other reasons (e.g. the socio-political environment and voter preferences), the effectiveness of the quota laws may also depend on the following factors (see Table 2.1):

1. ***Level of the gender quota specified by law*** (i.e. the requirement that women constitute a certain percentage of a party's candidates in legislative elections), which determines the share of women that can be expected. To be realistic, quotas

Table 2.1. **Key elements of Quota Laws and Political Systems in OECD countries *****

	QuotaType			Quota Level Specified		Other quota	Penalty	Electoral system (national)			Electoral statistics **		# of parties
Country	Lower House	Upper House	Regional Level	For women	For men		for non-compliance	System	Placement	Details	Latest election	First after law	Lower/Single House
Belgium	☑	☑	☑	50%	50%	No	Rejection of list	PR (Flexi)	Yes	Top 2	39.3% (2010)	36.7% (2007)	13
France	☑	☑	☑	50%	50%	Voluntary	Financial	TRS	None	-	26.9% (2012)	12.3% (2002)	7
Greece	☑	-	☑	33.3%	33.3%	Voluntary	-	PR (Open)	None	-	21% (2012)	21% (2012)	9
Ireland	☑			30%	30%	No, but targets	Financial	STV	None	-	15.7% (2011)	n/a	5
Korea	☑	-	☑	30% and 50%	Not specified	Voluntary	Rejection of list	Parallel	Yes (50%)	Zipp list	15.7% (2012)	13% (2004)	5
Mexico	☑	☑	☑	40%	40%	Voluntary	Rejection of list	MMP	Yes	5-2, zipp	36.8% (2012)	28.2% (2009)	8
Poland	☑		☑	35%	35%	No	Rejection of list	PR (Open)	Yes	Top 3	23.7% (2011)	23.7% (2011)	6
Portugal	☑	-	☑	33%	33%	No	Financial	PR (Closed)	Yes	Zipp list	28.7% (2011)	28.3% (2007)	6
Slovenia	☑		☑	35%	35%	Voluntary	Rejection of list	PR (Open)	None	-	32.2% (2011)	13.3% (2008)	9
Spain	☑	☑	☑	40% (max 60%)	40% (max 60%)	Voluntary	Rejection of list	PR (Closed)	Yes	40%-5	36% (2011)	36.3% (2008)	17

Notes: Election system present in the country: **PR** – Proportional Representation; **TRS** – Single-Member Majoritarian Systems in two rounds; **STV** – Single transferable vote; **MMP** – Mixed-member proportional representation; **Parallel** – a mixed voting system where voters participate in two separate elections for a single chamber using different systems; **Top 2** – one of the two highest positions on the lists is reserved for a woman candidate; **Zipp list** – zipper list style placement (alternating men and women on the list); **5-2, zipp** – For the PR elections, each segment of five candidates on the list shall have two candidates of each gender, alternating between men and women candidates; **Top 3** – At least one woman must be included among each list's first three candidates; **40%-5** – Quota is applied to the list as a whole and to every five posts. If the number of eligible post is less than five, then the list must be as close as possible to the 40-60% equilibrium.

* Temporary appointment

** Electoral statistics (national elections) is the proportion of women in Lower/Single House Parliament.

*** Definitions of table categories are found in Annex 2.A1.

Source: OECD analysis based on www.ipu.org, www.quotaproject.com, 2014 OECD survey, national parliament websites.

should reflect the availability of required skills in labour market and education systems, which should also be supported by complementary measures to give women visibility and support their access to leadership professions as the main pool for political candidates. The higher the threshold, the higher the likelihood that more women will be elected. In Slovenia, for example, the step-wise increase in the quota level from 25% in the 2008 elections to 35% in the following 2011 elections show a clear effect of an increased quota level. A similar pattern is also observed in Mexico, which gradually introduced the quota between 2002 and 2008, but with a smaller effect.

2. ***Nature of the party lists*** (in Proportional Representation systems). Closed party lists (where voters choose based on party affiliation only) tend to be more conducive to the election of women candidates than open lists.[6] Still, in the case of closed party lists, the positioning of women's names is crucial to the electoral outcome. Closed lists are especially effective for women if political parties place them either high enough on the party lists or alternate with men in a zipper-list style (alternating men and women on the list). In open list systems, voters are able to choose any of the candidates on the list, which is of concern because sometimes voters (due to existing social prejudice) intentionally avoid voting for the women candidates. In this case, the party is not responsible for the final voting outcome, and if voters are prejudiced against women leaders, preferential voting may hurt women. Raising public awareness and combating stereotypes is crucial in such situations. For example, in Peru (which has an open-list PR system) women activists ran a campaign urging voters to give their preferential votes to one man and one woman. This led female candidates to fare as well as male candidates.

3. ***Rank order of women and men candidates***. The presence or absence of rules for party lists that regulate the rank order of women and men (placement mandates) influences whether or not women are elected to office (Norris, 2006). Thus, women might comprise 30% of the candidates on the party lists, but, due to the absence of placement mandates, women can be placed in unwinnable positions, such as lower down the candidate list. This may reduce their chances of election, since candidates are elected in the order they appear on the list, and candidates in positions further down the list have a lower probability of success. Even without an obligatory quota law, some political parties in Norway and Estonia alternate names of women and men on their party lists, which has raised the proportion of women in parliament for these parties.

4. ***The mean district magnitude*** (i.e. the number of eligible seats in an electoral district). Generally, as district magnitude increases, the number of parties that have a chance of winning a seat or the number of seats won by the largest parties also increase. If a party expects to win several seats, it will be much more conscious of trying to balance the number of women and men on the lists. Moreover, when district magnitude increases, the number of parties with multiple seats also increases, and this may provide women with more electoral opportunities in minor parties as well. The most advantageous case for women occurs when the whole country is one electoral district. A study of Japan also showed that district magnitude influences women's representation. During elections in 1996, women performed better in larger districts but frequently did not gain representation when the district magnitude was below 13. In later election years (between 2000 and 2005), the district effect was not as distinct. Even though the highest representation of women was found in the largest district magnitude, no direct effect was observed

for other districts. One explanation for this phenomenon is that district magnitude improves women's representation only if it leads to a large party magnitude, such as the number of seats a party anticipates winning (Iwanaga, 2008).

5. ***The penalties for non-compliance.*** A number of countries have introduced penalties for non-compliance with the quota regulation, and, depending on the country situation, the penalty can have different effects. Rejection of the party list seems to be the most powerful penalty that can be applied. However, it has different impacts across countries as a result of varying enforcement regulations and electoral systems, but also placement requirements (or the absence of such) of female candidates on the party lists. When, for example, a majority of candidates are elected in single-member districts with no placement mandates (e.g. Korea), women's names can be placed in unwinnable positions. Mexico also rejects party lists that do not comply with the quota regulations but exempts parties that

Box 2.3. **French women's path to power**

In Europe, French women were among the last to be granted the right to vote and stand for election. As of early 2004, women held only 12.3% of the seats in the National Assembly. Appointment from above has allowed women to become ministers more easily than members of Parliament, which has created a notable discrepancy between the high level of economic responsibilities held by women and their absence in the Parliament.

In June 2000, the so-called French "parity law" was approved. This law mandates parties to nominate an equal number of male and female candidates in municipal, legislative, and European elections. The law provides for a financial penalty for parties that fail to present 50% of candidates of each gender, with a margin of 2%. Parties are funded in two portions: one based on votes, the other based on seats won. Parties who do not respect parity lose funding from the first portion. The results of the first elections under the new rules in 2001 and in 2002 were contradictory. In March 2001, the number of women at the municipal level almost doubled from 25 to 47%. These elections were governed by proportional representation that required parties to present three women and three men in any order for every six candidates. Parties that failed to comply with this regulation would have their lists rejected. In contrast, elections to the National Assembly held in 2002 yielded an increase of only 1.4%, from 10.9% to 12.3%. These elections were governed by a two-round majoritarian electoral system. The law requires parties to nominate equal numbers of women and men across all the districts they are contesting. However, the parity law does not prevent the placement of women candidates in unwinnable seats. Consequently, most parties responded by concentrating women primarily in unwinnable seats. While larger parties were able to absorb the resulting losses in state funding, the loss of funding turned out to be crucial for small parties with few or no parliamentary seats.

This example shows that legislated quotas may or may not work depending on other conditions including the type of electoral system and the penalties introduced for non-compliance. In 2012, the law was strengthened, making it more costly for parties to ignore parity. This did provide the expected surge in women's representation, to some extent, with the proportion of women deputies rising to 26.9% (although some argue that the increase is due more to a left-wing victory than to tightened parity legislation).

Sources: Sineau, M. (2005), *The French experience: Institutionalizing Parity*, in Ballington and Karam (eds.), *International IDEA: Women in Parliament. Beyond Numbers*; Norris, P. and M. Krook (2011), *Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Action Plan*, OSCE Draft Report; Murray, R. (2013), "Towards Parity Democracy? Gender in the 2012 French Legislative Elections", *Parliamentary Affairs*, 66, pp. 197-212.

democratically elect their candidates, which may, in turn, provide a loophole in enforcement of the quota law (Baldez 2007; Peschard 2003). For some parties, financial penalties might provide weaker incentives to comply with the quota law than rejection of the candidate list. Enforcement mechanisms can range from fines to rejection of registration. Costa Rica is often cited as an example of the potential impact of gender quotas, given that women's representation jumped from 19% to 35% in 2002 following the adoption of legislated candidate quotas. Costa Rica issues strong sanctions for non-compliance, including the possible rejection of a party's list if it contains less than the statutory minimum number of women. Slovenia follows a similar practice. Legislated quotas require a minimum of 25% candidates of each gender at all three levels of government; any party that does not follow the rule risks having its electoral list rejected by the state electoral management body (European Commission, 2008).

6. ***Additional voluntary party quotas.*** The presence of additional voluntary party quota, especially in leading party(ies) may also have a positive impact on women's representation in parliament and reinforce the impact of legislative quotas (e.g. French Socialist's party's 50% voluntary quota; Greek Panhellenic Socialist Movement).

Overall, it is difficult to assess which factors play the biggest role in determining the success of quota laws; the type of political system and the starting point of the country in terms of political representation are also key factors. Nonetheless, these elements must come together for a successful system that enables effective women's access to political leadership. Effective penalties that are duly enforced have also been found to be crucial for all countries with quota legislations. Moreover, countries that have only a single-member majoritarian system will find it harder to increase the number of women in parliament unless political parties themselves promote women into top positions. Yet, whatever the election system, ensuring that at least a certain percentage of women is placed in winnable positions on candidate lists is another essential pre-requisite for making the quota law work. In addition, any quota should also promote the diversity of women; otherwise, there is a risk of promoting policies that represent the interests of only the more privileged groups of women. Finally, left-leaning parties are usually more likely to adopt gender quotas, although right-wing parties may also consider such measures, as temporary solutions to enhance women's representation to correct for legacies of gender gaps.

Voluntary party quotas

Voluntary party quotas are widely used all over the world, including in OECD countries with the highest representation of women in legislatures such as Sweden (see Box 2.4.), Norway and Iceland.[7] In Norway, for example, the voluntary quota which was initiated by a number of political parties in the 1970s and 1980s, was an important condition for increasing the number of women MPs.

By 2000, almost half of 76 European political parties, mainly left-oriented and with at least ten members in the lower house, used voluntary gender quotas. Among the European parties using gender quotas, one-third (33%) of their elected representatives were women, on average. South Africa increased the number of women MPs using a closed list PR electoral system (listing a woman as every third candidate) and voluntary political party-based quotas. In South Africa, women hold 42% of the seats in the lower house and 32% in the upper house of Parliament (International Parliamentary Union, 2014).

Voluntary party quotas are established within specific parties. Since quota rules and internal regulations are determined within each party, these are distinct from electoral statutes

enforceable by the courts. Voluntary quotas can be effective in increasing the number of women. Among countries where only voluntary quotas have been implemented, nearly two-thirds have at least 20% women parliamentarians. Nevertheless, the success of the voluntary quota depends largely on the individual party's commitment to women in public office, and a

Box 2.4. **Enabling women to reach decision-making posts in Sweden**

Sweden is seen as one of the world's most gender-egalitarian countries. Sweden is among the top four countries worldwide in terms of share of women MPs (45%). At present, women hold 13 of the 24 government ministerial posts. Moreover, women make up 42% of the members of Sweden's municipal councils, and about one-third of Sweden's municipal commissioners. Women's active participation in political life is also reflected through a slightly higher turnout in elections compared to men.

This high level of integration of women is a relatively recent phenomenon. In 1971, the proportion of women MPs stood at 14%. By 2003, it reached 45% and has stayed at this level with only slight variations. The turning point in the political participation of women occurred in 1972. The leaders of the two leading parties at that time, the Liberals and the Social Democrats, started to compete for female voters to gain more seats. The Social Democratic party introduced a central gender policy unit in government and, in the same year, the Liberal Party was the first party in Sweden to formally recommend that women should make up 40% of its internal leadership positions, as in the party's governing board.

What is distinctive in Sweden's experience is the integration of women into the established party structures, the open debate on measures concerning women's representation within parties, and the gradual development of measures to raise women's representation. Formulated goals have gradually taken the shape of stricter recommendations. Furthermore, the Green Party, the Liberals and the Social Democrats have implemented voluntary party quotas. In addition to the voluntary quota, parties use a "zipper list" style, alternating male and female names throughout the list. In closed list systems, this method ensures that women candidates are actually elected into parliaments and not included only for the sake of window dressing.

The political will was complemented by the comparatively generous system for parental leave in Sweden, which encourages the sharing of leave days between both parents. Parental leave in Sweden is very flexible. The total leave of 480 days can be taken by the month, week, day, or even hour. Moreover, 60 days of leave are allocated specifically to each parent and cannot be transferred to the other. Equal sharing of leave is also encouraged by the government and rewarded with a daily bonus of SEK 50.

The Swedish example demonstrates a comprehensive and holistic approach to promoting women to the top echelons of power by dealing with institutional (political will, party lists and electoral system), socio-economic (women's active labour force participation and high educational attainment) and cultural factors (media and activist involvement). In addition, despite successful outcomes, female representation in the Swedish Parliament seems to have peaked at the 45% level, suggesting a ceiling effect as countries start to reach gender parity in parliamentary office. A similar effect is observed in other Scandinavian countries, for example, Norway and Finland. In addition, women still tend to lag behind in economic participation, especially when leading positions are considered, and there is still a gender wage gap. Women also take most of the leave days (in 2012 men took about 24% of parental leave) implying that the bulk of caring responsibilities continues to lie with them.

Sources: Government Office of Sweden (2009), "The Swedish Government's gender equality policy, Fact Sheet", Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, Stockholm; Wängnerud, L. (2009). "Women in parliaments: Descriptive and substantive representation", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, 51-69, DOI:10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.053106.123839.

change in the ruling party might then affect the proportion of women in parliament. Overall, the party's good faith compliance is the only guarantee for the voluntary quota to work, which might be considered a weaker assurance than statutory laws or reserved seats. Voluntary quotas may give parties more control to decide on this issue while preserving their autonomy.

Reserved seats

Reserved seats "hold" a number of seats in a legislated assembly for women (men are not eligible to contest these places) and are said to work under any type of electoral system (Laserud and Taphorn, 2007: 28). This policy has been adopted to boost women's representation in local government in India, and in some countries in Africa and South Asia, although no OECD countries have adopted this system for women's representation. The system of reserved seats has been in used in other OECD countries to guarantee representation for minority groups, such as for Maori in New Zealand (up until 1967).

Reserved seats guarantee a minimum number of women in elected office without the uncertainty that arises from the implementation of statutory quotas. Reserved seats can be enforced through constitutional provisions or electoral laws, and implemented either through appointment or competitive election. The reserved seats approach has often been called the "fast-track" approach since it enables a rapid change in the number of women represented. This policy is especially popular in countries with otherwise low proportions of women in politics and has been used effectively in a number of post-conflict countries. Early policies reserved between 1 and 10% of seats for women, but more recent measures have entailed much larger provisions of 30% (Norris and Krook, 2011). A prominent example is Rwanda, which leads all national parliaments in terms of proportion of women. The rate of increase in numbers of women in Parliament has been faster in Rwanda in the last 30 years than in any other country (for more details, please see Box 2.5.)

Reserved seats have raised some concerns, including perceived interference with democratic election processes; additionally, they may serve as an inadvertent ceiling for women's participation. Moreover, reserved seats might mean that political strategies are collapsed into a single demand for a quota, and women, in reality, are side-lined from the decision-making process (Waylen, 2006; Hassim and Meintjes, 2005). For example, Morocco introduced proportional list voting in 2002 in response to women's movements, and the political parties agreed to set aside places (30 out of 325 total members of the lower House of Parliament) on the national list for female candidates. The recent constitutional reform in 2011 increased the number of seats reserved for women to 60 out of the 395 seats. Women elected through a proportional representation system based on nation-wide closed party lists fill the reserved seats; however, since the national list includes women, most political parties believe that they do not need to include female candidates on the local lists. Where women members are appointed to reserved seats by the president or chief executive, they lack an independent electoral or organisational base. This may re-inforce control of parliament by the majority party (Tinker, 2004).

Across OECD countries, women's movements were at the forefront of many policy changes leading to an increase of women in employment and politics. Iceland, for example, has a strong history of women's movements. The Women Alliance (formed in 1983), a grassroots organisation of women from around the country, gave an important push to the political agenda by raising new issues that women can relate to and giving them a different perspective. "It was a wake-up call for many political parties" (OECD, 2014). In Ireland, for instance, the first proposal for the gender quota came from the Women's Council of the Labour Party, which was then taken up by public debate.

In South Africa, the women's movement contributed to the adoption of 30% quotas in National Assembly elections to correct for a legacy of female under-representation. The UK Labour party introduced a voluntary party quota, which led to 22% of women's representation based on the results of the last elections.[8]

Box 2.5. **Women's political leadership in Rwanda**

With women accounting for 64% of its lower house, Rwanda ranks first among all countries in terms of the number of women elected to parliament. Indeed, the increase in female representation is remarkable, from about 18% in the early 1990s.

Rwanda's achievement is largely due to the constitutional quota, which reserves 24 of the 80 seats in the lower house and 30% of the seats in the upper house for women. However, the post-conflict situation and the role played by women's movements in lobbying for this change were crucial components of the overall success (Powley, 2005). The political will on the part of ruling parties was essential in the decision to increase women's representation.

When the drafting of the new Constitution commenced, the women's movement mobilised actively around the drafting to ensure that equality became a cornerstone of the new document. After the new constitution was adopted in 2003, women won 48.8% of seats in Rwanda's lower house of Parliament.

Today, in addition to their usual functions, women in Rwanda's Parliament have formed a caucus, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, where members work together on a set of issues across party lines. A key legislative achievement in 1999 was the revoking of laws that prohibited women from inheriting land (Ibid).

However, women are still not free from stereotypes. Since some of the new female parliamentarians are inexperienced legislators, they must overcome stereotypes about their (lack of) competence as leaders. Moreover, there seem to be status differences between those seats that are reserved for women and those that are gained in open competition with men. There is also a fear that political will might reflect a political calculus: reserved seats are "given" in exchange for loyalty to the president or ruling party (Tripp et al., 2006; Longman, 2008). There are still greater challenges at the local levels, where women's representation is lower, as beliefs that women cannot be leaders still prevail in local communities (International Alert, 2012).

Sources: Powley, E. (2005), *Rwanda: Women Hold up Half the Parliament*, in Ballington and Karam (eds.), *International IDEA: Women in Parliament. Beyond Numbers*; International Alert (2012), *Women's political participation and economic empowerment in post-conflict countries. Lessons from the Great Lakes region in Africa*; Tripp, A., D. Konate and C. Lowe-Morna (2006), "Sub-Saharan Africa: On the Fast Track to Women's Political Representation", in Dahlerup, D. (ed.), *Women, Quotas and Politics*, pp. 112-37. London: Routledge; Longman, T. (2008), "Rwanda: Expanding Women's Representation in the Aftermath of War", unpublished article manuscript, Poughkeepsie, Vassar College.

Complementary policy solutions

While quota regulations can open the path into the legislature for women as a transitional measure, they are not sufficient to ensure equal access to decision making for both women and men. Establishing more family-friendly parliaments, giving all MPs an equal say and providing support to potential and existing MPs will ensure a more gender-balanced pool of MP candidates. To this end, countries are introducing a range of measures to both enhance the attractiveness of the political office to women and help them develop the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective public leaders.

Strengthening work-life balance

Increasing women's political presence also requires parliaments to become more "family-friendly". This involves instituting gender-sensitive parliamentary practices and procedures, such as ending parliamentary business at reasonable times, re-organising schedules to account for family responsibilities or spreading parliamentary business over a shorter number of days (Cool, 2010). The challenge is especially pronounced for new MPs, who must find their way in a multi-faceted job for which no job description exists, while balancing family life. An opinion survey in the United Kingdom revealed that MPs identify loss of family time, communication with friends, financial hardship and ill health as detrimental consequences of becoming an MP (Korris, 2011). Working hours are very long (typically 60-72 hours per week, with 8-10 hours of travel). Moreover, the parliamentary sitting times usually start later in the morning and, consequently, conclude later in the day (Ibid). This is particularly a challenge for women, who usually devote more of their time to caring for their children. However, a number of OECD countries have introduced policies to help MPs balance their work and family lives (see Box 2.6).

Box 2.6. **"Family-friendly" parliaments**

Changing parliamentary *sitting times* are among the most common family-friendly reforms. **Sweden**'s *Riksdag* undertook an internal audit to determine its gender sensitivity and now prepares its parliamentary calendar one year in advance, with sittings scheduled on particular days of the week between October and June. Other jurisdictions, including **Scotland**, **Wales**, **Ontario**, **British Columbia** and **Québec**, also have revised their daily sitting schedules, which has led to compressed sitting weeks or schedules that start earlier in the day. In **Canada**, a fixed parliamentary calendar outlining the sitting schedule was first adopted in 1982. At present, the three major adjournments are scheduled to coincide with the school calendar. The International Parliamentary Union reports that a total of 39% of parliaments have aligned sitting times with the school calendar and 21.7% of parliaments have discontinued night sittings (Palmieri, 2011). Denmark achieved a considerably high proportion of women in Parliament, mainly due to regulated working day. MPs are expected to be in Parliament from Monday to Thursday, but most weeks votes take place twice a week and both times before 4 p.m. Moreover, on a regular working day, MPs do not have late night meetings and parliamentarians can go back to their families in the evenings. In **Norway**, the Parliament has also adjusted its working times. Before meetings took place between 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and again after 6 p.m., which did not allow for sufficient time with the family. However, the system was changed to avoid holding too many meetings in the afternoon. Late-night meetings are now the exception and not the rule.

Moreover, the *good public infrastructure of care facilities* helps mothers and fathers alike to combine work and family life (OECD, 2014). The **Norwegian** Parliament provides child care facilities for its members, including a play room for children whose parents have meetings in the afternoons. Although there is no parliamentary facility for pre-school children, places are organised for small children in nearby kindergartens. Childcare facilities have also been provided in other countries (e.g. Portugal and Ireland), although childcare opening hours are often incompatible with working hours of MPs. Older children (pre-school and school-age) tend to stay in their hometowns.

Another family-friendly reform is *proxy voting*, which counts the votes of parliamentarians on parental leave or of those who cannot attend a vote in the chamber due to childcare responsibilities. According to the International Parliamentary Union, 5.9% of parliaments allow proxy voting (Palmieri, 2011). Offering financial assistance for child expenses or providing for a family-friendly infrastructure (e.g. childcare facilities on site) further supports parents (and especially mothers) in their childcare responsibilities. For example, Canada's parliamentarians have benefitted from the Parliament Hill pre-school centre for over 30 years (Ryckewaert, 2012).

Box 2.6. **"Family-friendly" parliaments** *(continued)*

In many parliaments, only parliamentarians are permitted on the floor of the chamber. However, the practice has been challenged by parents with babies and toddlers (Palmieri, 2011). This flexibility can help mothers and fathers to combine their care and work responsibilities. Since women are the prime carers in families in all countries, the introduction of more "family-friendly" parliaments will encourage greater numbers of women to seek political office.

Sources: Palmieri, S. (2011), *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practices*, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Reports and Documents no. 65-2011, Geneva, Switzerland; OECD (2014), *Survey on Gender Equality in Public Life in OECD Countries*; Ryckewaert, L. (2012), "Female MPs still fighting for structural, institutional changes in federal politics", *The Hill Times*, 12 March 2012.

Establishing support networks

Although some researchers doubt the effectiveness of women's caucuses to influence women's political power, the number of parliaments with cross-party women's caucuses continues to increase. Women's caucuses serve as an important vehicle for encouraging peer co-operation and support among elected women across party lines, and, in some cases, help women to raise money for elections. As one MP stated: "caucuses give women the energy". 61% of the respondents surveyed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union believe that such caucuses have been successful in influencing parliamentary or legislative activities and providing oversight; two-thirds of respondents believed that women's caucuses had successfully united women across party lines (International Parliamentary Union, 2008). Parliamentary committees charged with addressing gender equality matters exist in 80 countries. The Inter-Parliamentary Union argues that these committees provide a valuable forum for both men and women parliamentarians to scrutinise proposed legislation from a gender perspective and enhance the gender aspects of many political issues and the legislative agenda itself (Ibid). Moreover, women legislators also benefit from mentoring and networking with women who have previously served in elected office (National Democratic Institute, 2008). Such connections offer quick access to rules and procedures, especially informal norms that enable effective legislating (Markham, 2012). However, some MPs argue that effective women's caucuses strongly depend on good leadership and practices, and that caucuses could undermine the equality argument if the segregation between women and men is taken too far.

Providing financial support

Campaigning for political office in any country is a costly and time-consuming affair. For women candidates – particularly those running for office for the first time – raising sufficient funding to contest the election can be a significant challenge. Financing specifically targeted to support women's electoral bids, therefore, is critical to ensuring that women have the necessary resources to mount competitive campaigns. In the United States, political action committees such as EMILY's List or the WISH List provide money to potential woman candidates. In some other countries, funding for political parties is tied to appropriate levels of women's representation. France requires that 50% of all candidates be women, and political parties that do not comply face financial sanctions. This mechanism has been effective with small parties that have limited resources. Larger parties with more abundant resources however, may be more inclined to pay the fines and break this rule. Italian political parties receive a subsidy equal to at least 5% of their total electoral funding

for initiatives to promote women's participation (IPU, 2009a). In Canada, recognising the need to support women financially, the New Democratic Party organised a fund only for women candidates.

Targeted recruitment campaigns

Cultivating women's interest to run for office and actively recruiting them could increase their representation. A US study shows that 24% of women senior representatives and 15% of their male colleagues said that being asked by the party/elected officials was the single most important reason they ran for office (Moncrief et al., 2001). Innovative approaches to attract more women into a political career should also be considered. The OECD 2014 survey shows that involving women at the grassroots level is critical, as it is likely to encourage them to stay longer in politics. Cultivating interest in politics can be achieved through local meetings, brunches or conferences. In Norway, the Labour Party organised a "Women can do it" campaign at the regional level, encouraging women to join party organisations. Moreover, programmes motivating parties to achieve a better gender balance have also taken place. Parties can also work on bringing young members into youth organisations. However, the necessary infrastructure (reasonable working hours, parental leave arrangements and childcare facilities) is required to reduce the high attrition rates of women on the way from a youth organisation to party membership.

Leadership and skills development

Indeed, the ability to confidently participate in debates and to have sufficient driving force, ambition and leadership were some of the key success factors reported by the surveyed MPs. Training by political parties is particularly useful, since it offers insight into how the MP's party understands electoral and legislative procedures and how the party itself fits into the procedures. Media training is also important for women, as they often have less experience than their male colleagues in running for office and may be misperceived by the media. In some parts of the world, political parties offer special skills training especially for women, since they may be less experienced in legislative procedures than men (see Box 2.7). Other examples of training programmes include the Latvian "Vote for Woman" campaign organised by the Resource Centre for Women "Marta" (www.marta.lv). The Centre ran a three-year educational project to support women in male-dominated environments. Moreover, non-governmental organisations, such as the International Women's Democracy

Box 2.7. **Political training for women in Italy**

In Italy, the Ministry for Rights and Equal Opportunities promoted a training project titled "Women, Politics, and Institutions" to improve women's education and interest in politics. The course (provided by the Ministry free of charge) was held in 41 universities across Italy over four years (90 hours) or two years (60 hours). The universities designed their own programmes based on six thematic fields: *i)* Women in decision making; *ii)* European Union institutions; *iii)* The organisation and functioning of national institutions; *iv)* Local government offices; *v)* The party system in Italy; and *vi)* Public communication. Overall, the project aimed at providing women with adequate and effective training to enable them to participate more actively in politics and decision-making positions at the national and local levels. More information about the course is available at: www.mpo.hoplo.it/percorsiformativi/ or www.unical.it/portale/ateneo/progetti/donnepolitica/.

Center or Equal Voice, offer campaign and leadership workshops or online training opportunities. However, given that women must interact with male counterparts to achieve success, training should also include events with mixed audiences where men and women are exposed to the skills of their peers (Markham, 2012).

Some of these and other measures related to making parliaments more gender sensitive are also included in the 2012 Action Plan for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments prepared by the International Parliamentary Union (see Box 2.8).

Box 2.8. **A framework for gender-sensitive parliaments**

The International Parliamentary Union defines a gender-sensitive parliament as the one that:

- Promotes and achieves equality in numbers of women and men across all of its bodies and internal structures.
- Develops a gender equality policy framework suited to its own national parliamentary context.
- Mainstreams gender equality throughout all of its work.
- Fosters an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality and responds to the needs and realities of MPs – both men and women – to balance work and family responsibilities.
- Acknowledges and builds on the contribution made by its male members who pursue and advocate for gender equality.
- Encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality.
- Equips its parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women in senior positions and ensures that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the work of the parliamentary administration.

Source: International Parliamentary Union (2012), *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*, available at www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/action-gender-e.pdf.

In addition to these examples of specific measures, however, women's access to power depends on broader country measures to balance work and family, including the availability of parental leave, childcare facilities and measures to encourage parental sharing of family responsibilities. A country's socio-cultural environment is also crucial in influencing voters' perceptions regarding female candidates. In this context, the media can play a key role in shaping the image of politicians and can be used as a vehicle to change attitudes regarding gender and raise awareness about gender issues. Steps are needed to increase gender sensitivity within the media to reduce the reliance on stereotypes (e.g. judging women on their appearances) and to equally portray both men and women politicians. The Internet presents another important venue for female candidates who want equal competition with male candidates, especially in situations where resources are limited. Other measures such as civic education – including increasing general knowledge about rights and laws, encouragements from a young age and the presence of role models – can both enable women to gain confidence to run for office and educate voters to confront

biases against women. Finally, whatever strategies are undertaken, results cannot be achieved without political leadership and the enforcement of existing laws. Commitment by the government and political parties is crucial to changes in this regard. Strong signals from party leaders, such as setting targets to increase women's representation in parties or putting women in winnable positions on candidate lists, would serve as a very strong encouragement.

Towards gender balance in the political executive (cabinets)

Cabinets use complex formal and informal appointment mechanisms, which often depend on the political will of the heads of the state/government and the dynamics of the governing party. The governing systems in countries, whether a presidential or parliamentary system, also affect appointment processes to the cabinet. In a parliamentary system, members of the legislature choose the prime minister and, hence, his/her term of office is directly linked to that of the legislature; in presidential systems, the terms are not linked. In a parliamentary system, cabinet members must also belong to the legislature. Another key distinction between these two systems lies in the power to remove the prime minister or to dissolve the legislature (possible under the parliamentary system).

Despite these differences, no systematic effect on the prevalence of women in the cabinet can be identified under either of the two governing systems. Countries with similar systems show very different proportions of women in cabinet. Some countries with different governing systems – such as Chile (presidential system), France (hybrid system) and Spain (parliamentary system) – have introduced parity in the cabinet to achieve greater equality in decision making. Yet, achieving gender balance or even parity in cabinets appears to be more straightforward than in parliaments, particularly in presidential systems, where appointments are often dependent on political will and the availability of qualified candidates. In parliaments, gender balance depends on complex interactions between voter preferences, party politics and electoral systems. With a near-to-parity Cabinet and one of the lowest rates of women's representation in Parliament, Chile provides a clear example of these trends (See Box 2.9).

Various countries' experiences show that increasing women's participation in legislatures strengthens (but does not guarantee) their chance of joining the political executive. In many countries, the route to the top echelons of the executive often involves parliamentary and junior ministry experiences. In Canada, for example, prime ministers must recruit and select their cabinet ministers from among the members of their parliamentary caucus. Other countries, such as the United States and France, are less constrained in their choices. Prime ministers and presidents are the principal selectors of those who will serve in their cabinets (Jalalzai and Tremblay, 2011). The commitment of political elites to a more diverse decision-making body, the existing political system and, in particular, a country's electoral system can be conducive to increasing the share of women in the cabinets. While there are debates in countries on the need to use gender quotas in the nomination of cabinet ministers (Annesley, 2014), the application of this measure is not yet practiced in OECD countries.

In sum, being a minister or a parliamentarian requires significant commitment, time and devotion. It is a demanding job for both men and women and there is a limit to how the lifestyle can be improved. Yet, since women have entered this profession much later than men and remain the primary caretakers of children, they face more challenges. The main concerns raised by women MPs relate to the organisation of parliaments, long and unforeseeable working hours and time spent travelling. The other barriers most frequently mentioned are cultural stereotypes in societies and in the media.

As a result, worldwide, a smaller proportion of women are represented in parliaments, and considerably fewer women than men rise to the pinnacle of executive power. Yet, having women share decision-making responsibilities with men is a prerequisite of any democratic society, restoring trust in government and ensuring the inclusiveness of growth.

Box 2.9. **Breaking the legislative glass ceiling in Chile**

The pattern of female participation in the legislature contrasts with women's representation within the political executive, as women in Chile continue to face persistent barriers such as a stereotyped concept of authority. Indeed, Chile represents the region's forerunner in terms of achieving greater gender balance in ministerial appointments. President Lagos started this tradition in 2000 by appointing 13 women to cabinet posts out of 16 ministers and 28 undersecretaries. In 2002, he nominated Michelle Bachelet as Defense Minister, making her the first woman to hold this position in a Latin American country and one of the few in the world at the time. Chile further advanced equality in 2006 when Michelle Bachelet was elected to the country's highest decision-making position. As Chile's first woman President, Bachelet included gender equality as a political goal and established gender parity in her cabinet.* Moreover, 2013 presidential race saw two women, Michelle Bachelet and Evelyn Matthei, advance to the second round of the election.

Yet, despite such high-profile political achievements, remaining barriers (such as entrenched social stereotypes) often interfere with Chile's road to gender equality in political participation. From local government to the National Congress, men tend to dominate Chilean politics, and Chile remains one of the Latin American countries with the fewest women in Parliament. In 2005 women's representation in the Chamber of Deputies sat at 14.2%, compared to a regional average of 22.4%, and at 13.2% in the Senate (ECLAC). After the legislative election of 2013 little progress was made, with 15.8% in the lower house (for a regional average of 25%) and 18.4% in the upper house (IPU) for an overall total of 17 women currently represented in the lower house. Only two of 11 deputies from Bachelet's Socialist Party (PS) are women. The Christian Democrats (PDC), a fellow Nueva Mayoría coalition partner, brings only one woman deputy out of 19 to the lower chamber.

Where achieving gender parity in the cabinet is seen as a personal initiative of the President, closing the legislative gender gap is grounded in will across the full political spectrum. Moreover, the lack of political support hinders the advancement of women's political representation in general. In her second term, President Bachelet allocated fewer ministerial portfolios to women than in her previous administration, highlighting ongoing resistance from governing political elites. Yet progress is being made. Three main political parties (PS, DC and Party for Democracy -PPD) implemented voluntary quota systems, albeit at low percentages: 20% quota share for publicly elected officials, and a 40% quota for electing internal leadership. While rejected during Bachelet's first administration, a new legislated candidate quotas bill developed under the Piñera administration was presented in April 2013 to the lower house, proposing financial benefits for parties that adhere to 20% female representation in their lists of candidates. The new administration continues this initiative. During her time as Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, President Bachelet strongly supported and believed in transitional measures to push the share of female parliamentarians upward.

* However, the percentage of women in the subsequent cabinet of President Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014) was down by 27 percentage points compared to the first Bachelet administration, from 47% to 20%.

Source: Camara de Diputados de Chile, www.camara.cl; Inter-Parliamentary Union, www.ipu.org; UN-Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), www.eclac.cl; Quota Project, www.quotaproject.org.

The different levels of progress made by OECD and partner countries in achieving gender parity in decision making are contingent on a number of factors. Political will, combined with the structural and contextual features of political systems, play a decisive role in determining women's participation in politics. Historical legacies and attitudes toward women in office influence the ability of women in cabinet and parliament to exercise their powers. The existence of proportionally based electoral systems and gender equality laws (e.g. quotas) tend to improve the representation of women in the legislature, at least as a temporary solution to reach parity. The quota laws should not be seen in a vacuum, but rather serve as an acknowledgement that women start from a lagging position. Yet, if the main reasons are parliamentary working conditions or the lack of an adequate social support system, quota legislation or an electoral system will have a limited effect.

Addressing inequalities in the distribution of unpaid work, establishing adequate mechanisms to balance family and career responsibilities (leave schemes, childcare facilities), encouraging men to participate more in childcare responsibilities and taking advantage of work-life balance measures (e.g. parental and paternity leaves) are additional important conditions for women's political engagement. The political literacy of voters, the media representation of both male and female political candidates and the strength of women's organisations can affect the degree and speed of reform. In all countries with strong gender equality, awareness-raising campaigns and the presence of dedicated women's movements played a significant role, signalling to policy makers that change was necessary and possible.

Access to the judiciary

Since justice, fairness, and equality are central values in the law, they should be reflected in the composition of the judiciary itself at all levels; one judge said, "society consists of men and women, who are equal, and the court is the mirror of society" (OECD, 2014). Judges are independent of parliament and the executive, but they should not stand apart from the society over which they adjudicate. The public must have confidence in the judges who make the decisions that affect daily life. A representative judiciary thus calls for individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, opinions and perspectives. Increasing gender balance in the judiciary also preserves the legitimacy of the courts as representative of the societies they serve and helps maintain public confidence in the justice system. Indeed, a more diverse decision-making mix improves the quality of group decisions and protects against group thinking (Farhang and Wawro, 2004; Massie et al., 2002; Peresie, 2005), as also indicated by OECD survey: "balanced courts are important, as a mix of opinions is highly beneficial for the judicial process" (OECD, 2014). Women jurists can help eliminate barriers to gender-responsive justice – particularly around issues related to violence against women, sexual harassment, inheritance laws and discriminatory citizenship laws. A number of judges pointed out that "the presence of women judges made a difference to the enforcement of domestic violence legislation" and that in "discrimination and domestic violence cases women victims felt more comfortable during the cross examination when there was a woman judge present" (OECD, 2014).

Moreover, courts function as a prime site of accountability for gender equality. Evidence confirms that the presence of women jurists is vital to ensuring the implementation and safeguarding of equality rights. Courts that operate free of gender bias and other forms of discriminatory practices can be powerful drivers of social change. Women judges may better understand how laws can affect the lives of other women and girls, creating fairer and conducive environments for women's empowerment and countering social and institutional barriers in the justice system that deny women access to legal redress. Although few judges (including women judges) would agree, research conducted primarily in the United States

demonstrates that women judges are 11% more likely to rule in favour of the plaintiff in employment discrimination cases (Boyd et al., 2007 and UNIFEM, 2012). Another study found plaintiffs significantly more likely to win when a female judge was on the bench. Panels with at least one female judge decided cases for the plaintiff more than twice as often as did all-male panels (Peresie, 2005). Yet most interviewed judges stress the importance of a professional legal approach to a case, irrespective of whether it is being decided upon by a man or a woman (OECD, 2014). It is also becoming increasingly acknowledged that judges are professionals with at least a decade of legal practice (OECD, 2014), while the stereotype that "women judges are more emotional than men" is gradually fading. Indeed, a study of US state high court judges in 1998-2000 illustrates that women judges perform at least as well as male judges. Relying on three measures of judicial output (opinion production, outside-state citations, and co-partisan disagreements) the research concludes that women perform just as well as the men in terms of basic judging measures (Choi et al., 2009).

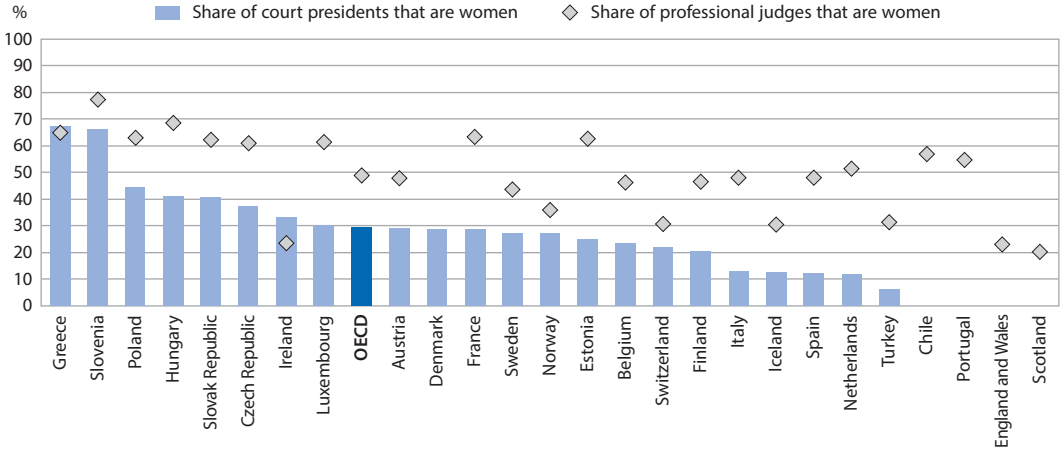
Women in the judiciaries: a snapshot

Throughout the last half-century, the gateways to various professions have been opening for women. Across OECD countries, women have made impressive gains in the field of law, as practising lawyers, legal counsellors, law professors and judges.

Legal experts and judges interviewed by the OECD confirm: "Some 30 or 40 years ago it would have been unusual to see a woman among the judges; however, today it is a well-accepted fact that there will be a woman judge in the court." Moreover, in some countries people coming to court would find "it strange that there is no woman on the bench" (OECD, 2014).

Indeed, in most OECD member and partner countries, women's participation in the judiciary is increasing – however, at different rates (see Figure 2.6). Women's access to judicial appointments in OECD countries range from highs of over 60% in Slovenia and

Figure 2.6. **Women as court presidents compared to their share of professional judgeships (2010)**



Note: Data on share of court presidents for Iceland, Ireland, Switzerland, and Turkey refer to first-instance courts only; data for Spain refers to second-instance courts only.

Source: OECD (2013), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on CEPEJ (2012); Evaluation of European Judicial Systems, 2012 edition (2010 data); CEPEJ Studies No. 18, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, France (database). OECD calculations. Data for Chile provided by national authorities.

Greece to lows of approximately 20% in the United Kingdom. As seen in Figure 2.6, in 2010, an average of just under half of the professional judges in OECD member countries were women. In the United States, women constitute 22% of all federal judgeships and 27% of all state-level court judges,[9] while women's representation in law school classes is approaching 50% and they represent 45% of law firm associates.

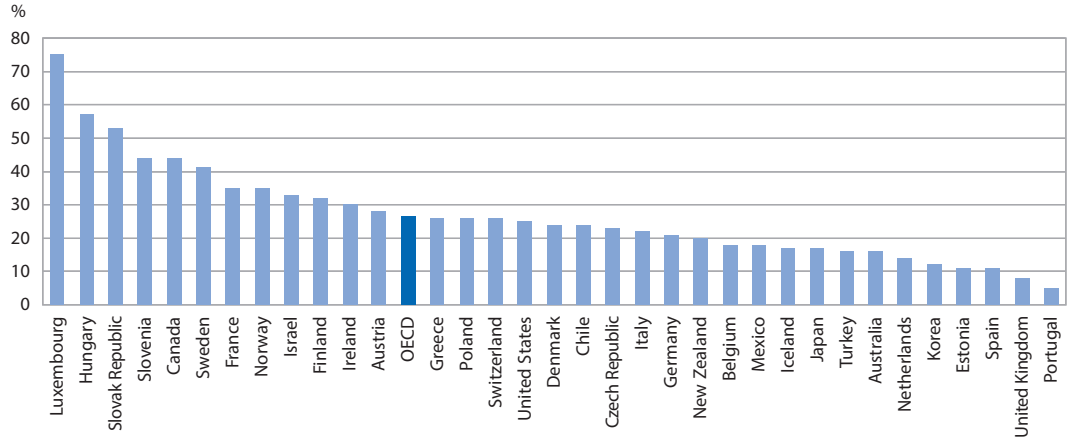
South Africa's courts have 25% women judges, Russia's 16% and India's only 3%. In the MENA region, women make up 25% of all jurists, which nears the global average (UNIFEM, 2012) although there are significant variations across the region. Tunisia boasts 28% women judges, Algeria 23.5% and Morocco 20%, whereas women judges in Gulf nations are much rarer; Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates appointed their first woman judges in 2006 and 2008, respectively.

Consistent with global trends of increasing levels of participation in local politics by women, women are generally more prevalent as judges in lower courts. For example, according to the 2014 OECD survey: "In Austria the representation of women in the judiciary at the lower levels is over 50%, although at the management levels far fewer women are present."

The under-representation of women in high-level courts partly relates to horizontal gender segregation in the judiciary in OECD countries. Usually, women tend to be better represented in the family courts, and other first-instance courts, resulting in fewer women being promoted into the upper courts.

Across OECD countries women are also relatively less represented in Supreme Courts, constituting on average of only 28% of justices. There are exceptions, such as Luxembourg where the proportion of women in the Supreme Courts is over 70% (see Figure 2.7). Moreover, women are in the majority or equal to men in the Supreme Courts, but not the judiciary overall, in Rwanda, Honduras, Latvia and Bulgaria. Women are also better represented on the Australian, United States and Canadian Supreme Courts than in the judiciary as a whole.

Figure 2.7. **Share of women supreme court justices, 2012 or latest year available**



Source: OECD (2013), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on the following sources: EU countries: European Commission Database on Women in Decision-Making. Non-EU countries: OECD 2011 Survey on Women in Pubic Leadership. Data for Australia, Canada, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Ukraine refer to 2010. Data for Chile, Norway and Israel refer to 2011. Data for Ireland, the United States and Japan refer to 2013.

At the international and regional levels, women's representation in high courts varies. Women comprise 32% of all Supreme Court judges in the European Union (EU) countries; in the Administrative Courts across all EU countries, women hold only two presidencies out of 19, and two out of 22 presidencies of Constitutional Courts (European Commission, 2014). No women serve as presidents of European Courts, and women's overall representation as European Court judges stands at 28%. Women filled only 29% of seats for first- and second-instance Court Presidents in the same year. Women were Presidents of Supreme Courts in only seven member countries with available data: Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Greece, Finland and Sweden.

The European Court of Human Rights has made visible improvements in gender balance, raising the proportion of women judges to 31%. Yet, there has never been a female president of the ECHR. The highest appointments are vice president or section presidents. Women have achieved parity in the International Criminal Court; by contrast, the International Court of Justice has 33% women judges.

As such, increasing women's appointments to the judiciary preserves the legitimacy of the courts as representative of the societies they serve and also helps maintain public confidence in the justice system.

Women's access to the judiciary: challenges and opportunities

While men have traditionally had greater presence in the legal profession, in many OECD countries, the judicial and legal professions are increasingly becoming more feminised, mainly driven by the attractive working conditions of the judiciary (e.g. flexible work hours, sound pay and benefits packages, public social support infrastructure). In fact, women tend to appear in large numbers mainly in civil law countries. Yet women's progress up the judicial ladder remains uneven. Any suggestion that a "trickle-up" effect eventually leads to women in higher judicial posts may fail to take into account the complex structural and cultural factors that determine the appointments of both women and men. Some explanations centre on the supply-side factors and a perceived lack of qualified women to serve as jurists. Other obstacles to women judges stem from structures of the legal system and the courts, as well as the method of appointment used to select candidates.

The size of the qualified labour pool of women is expanding; yet women are still missing from top-ranking judicial positions. The lack of qualified women was the first common explanation for the gender gap at the top, as women have entered legal education in large numbers only recently. In many countries, female representation remains highest at the lowest levels of the judiciary. Moreover, progression in a judicial career takes more time for women than for men (Thomas, 2005). In Italy, for example, close to 50% of the current professional judges are women. However, the largest percentage of women in the judiciary is found in the lower ranks: there are no women in executive positions on the Court of Cassation and, according to OECD data, just over 10% are court presidents. According to legal experts, "the paradox of the judicial profession is that it is feminising quickly, whereas the vertical segregation is fairly resilient" (*A judge from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

So the question is: if, on average, there are at least as many female as male law students, where are the women in top legal professions? A number of factors that may account for this gap are elaborated upon below.

Difference in aspirations or choices of career paths between female and male students

A 2011 study conducted in the United Kingdom on the career intentions of law students shows that the majority (70%) of students (both girls and boys) indicated "solicitor" as their preferred profession. Only 24% were aiming to become barristers. Gender-disaggregated data showed that the greater proportion of respondents who were likely to become solicitors were female, and the greater proportion who were likely to become barristers were male;[10] yet, in each case, the differences were not large (Hardee, 2012). Different attitudes between men and women towards the judicial profession may also influence the gendered difference in judicial career progression. Opinion surveys in the Netherlands and in Italy found that women are attracted to the justice element and social aspects of the profession, whereas challenge, prestige and career prospects are the dominant factors for prospective male judges (Thomas, 2005).

Difference in career expectations

A survey of Canadian students enrolled in the mandatory Professional Lawyer Training Course undertaken by the Law Society in 2011 also confirmed slight differences between career expectations of female and male law students. Overall, 85% of students indicated that they plan to be in private practice after graduating, while 10% plan to work for government or as in-house counsel. Men were slightly more likely to say they expected to practice law in a firm/private practice, while women were slightly more likely to express a preference for working in government or as in-house counsel. This might be an indication that while still in their studies, young women plan to make career choices that will allow for a better work-life balance. Both men and women indicate that balancing their professional and personal lives will be the biggest challenge in a law profession, although women were slightly more likely to say that this would be an issue (80%) than were men (73%) (Whitcombe, 2011). The gender differences in career choices might, however, be driven not only by gender differences in preferences but also by the working conditions, particularly the working hours, of the various career routes towards judicial posts. The long working hours, lack of flexible working arrangements and other pressures often associated with the legal profession (which is often necessary to become a judge, particularly in the common-law countries) can hinder the entry of women into higher professional ranks, as they usually remain main caregivers. As a judge pointed out: "[There is a] limit to how much a woman is ready to sacrifice [her personal life] for a career, which might reduce her willingness to apply for a [high court] position."

Challenges in balancing work and life

Balancing work and family life remains a challenge, especially for women during childbearing and child rearing. A US survey conducted in Texas shows that women are less likely to desire to be a judge because they see it as a more difficult career path for women than for men; 68% of female attorney respondents believe that women experience more barriers to becoming a judge. In another US study, about two-thirds of surveyed lawyers report experiencing work and family conflict, which was seen to be the greatest barrier to women's advancement. Some of the biggest challenges indicated include excessive hours, resistance to reduced or flexible schedules, and unpredictable deadlines, driven by client expectations (Rhode, 2001). At the same time, once women become judges they do not see the obstacle so acutely: only 27% of female judges saw women experiencing more barriers to becoming a judge. These responses may suggest that such perceptions possibly hold women back from becoming judges. The Italian case confirms that the work of a judge

itself can offer flexible hours, stability and the possibility to reconcile work and family. Nevertheless, this barrier is seen as significant on the path to a judicial career, particularly in the countries which require significant leadership and legal experience prior to being appointed as judges**.**

Stringent requirements for judicial appointments

It could also be the case that the requirements preceding a judicial appointment are particularly strenuous and serve as a disincentive to the judicial career path. Experts interviewed by the OECD confirm that in Commonwealth countries "traditionally the assumption has been that only top advocates, that is barristers, become top judges. The profession of barrister is highly demanding and, hence, there is a large attrition of women who start as qualified lawyers, but some years later are no longer in the private practice." For example, in England the requirement of sitting as a recorder before appointment to the High Court has been identified as an inhibiting factor. Given that women barristers are already finding it hard to juggle the demands of legal practice and family life, adding part-time judicial obligations constitutes a serious obstacle. In the United States, eligibility for judicial office assumes high standards of education and experience. One of the distinctive characteristics of US courts is that judges come to the bench later in life after significant experience outside the judiciary (Choi et al., 2009). In Finland, for example, there are more female than male judges overall, but fewer on the high courts. One possible explanation for the notably lower number of women in high courts might be the requirement to have a diverse career, which often involves moving to other cities to get more experience. Moreover, the selection process into the judiciary is highly dependent on building strong professional and personal reputations in mostly male legal circles. However, since women frequently have career paths different from their male colleagues, they are less likely to acquire such a reputation. For example, women are much less likely to hold partnerships in large, corporate law firms, a common route to federal judicial office (Rackley, 2013).

Persistent stereotypes

American research shows that women still face a long-standing double standard and a double bind. They risk criticism for being too "soft" or too "strident," too "aggressive" or "not aggressive enough." And what appears assertive in a man often may appear abrasive in a woman (Rhode, 2001). A related obstacle is that female attorneys often may not receive the same presumption of competence or commitment as their male colleagues. In large national surveys, between one-half and three-quarters of women believe that they are held to higher standards than men. The problem is compounded for women of colour or other identifiable minorities including disabled women (Ibid). Increasingly during job interviews, employers are prohibited by equality laws from asking the age, marital status or family plans of women candidates. Yet, care is needed to ensure the elimination of an unconscious bias that may lead to hiring and promoting employees similar to oneself (OECD, 2014).

Limited networks

An equally persistent problem is inadequate access to informal networks of mentoring, contacts, and client development. Despite recent progress, many attorneys are most comfortable supporting others who seem similar in background, experience and values. Many organisations do not provide adequate time and rewards for mentoring. The small number of women, particularly women of colour, in senior positions prevents adequate assistance for all the junior colleagues who need it. Female attorneys who have substantial

family commitments also have difficulty making time for mentoring relationships and for the informal social activities that generate collegial support and client contacts. The result is that many female lawyers remain out of the loop of career development (Rhode, 2001). The lack of support among women judges may also diminish their progression to higher positions, as much as the lack of support from family and society.

Structure of the legal systems and method of selection

Women judges tend to be better represented in civil law countries (which recruit judges to the career judicial service by examination) as opposed to jurisdictions with common law systems. Many civil law jurisdictions operate a so-called "career judiciary", where potential entrants begin training to become judges straight after their studies, rather than as a second career following success in the legal profession. Access to the judiciary is usually based on academic merit, which is often another advantage for women (Rackley, 2013) (see Box 2.10). Like entrance into private practice, however, the main gap is not at the entry level of the legal profession but going through to the top levels. According to a judge from a civil law country:

> "Young women do well [in the beginning of their career], but the turning point occurs when they start having children" (*A judge from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

Indeed, the interviews revealed that it is not uncommon that following the birth of a child, a woman judge may begin working on a part-time basis. Yet this arrangement may limit her access to professional development opportunities necessary to climb the judicial ladder. This, in turn, may undermine her success as a judge, given the increasingly high expectations placed on judges (OECD, 2014).

Box 2.10. **Examples of quota regulations in the judiciaries**

At the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) the overall increase in the proportion of women judges is due to an Assembly resolution that at least one of the three candidates presented to the Court by each national government should be a woman. If this condition is not fulfilled, the candidate lists are rejected by the Court. The Equal Treatment Law (of 50%) in Austria is applied in the judiciary, as it is part of the public sector. The law is applied only if the quota has not been reached and if two equally able candidates apply to a top judicial position. In such cases, priority should be given to the woman. The law also implies that in cases where the quota has not been fulfilled, the job advertisement for a high-ranking position should include a statement indicating a preference for female candidates. A similar approach is applied for training and further educational programmes. This has been introduced to change behaviour, since judges apply for permission to take part in training programmes (OECD, 2014).

Source: OECD (2014), *Survey on Gender Equality in Public Life in OECD Countries*.

Behavioural gender differences

Gender differences in behaviour, limited self-promotion and, at times, lack of confidence also play a role. For example, over the last five years there were four times more male applicants than female applicants to the Supreme Court of Finland. According to judges and legal specialists:

> "Women tend to listen more than express their view and they are less likely than men to actively seek promotion opportunities" (*A judge from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).
>
> "A woman wants to be sure that she is capable of the position before she applies [for it]" (*A judge from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).
>
> "Women are less likely than men to stand up for themselves, to ask for the promotion." Moreover, women seem to be less inclined to negotiate for salaries, appearing to believe "I have done a good job and they know what I have done" (*A judge from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

Showing less ambition is considered detrimental to career development by interviewed judges and experts, which consequently may reduce the possibility to move to higher judicial positions:

> "There is a difference between a person asking for an exciting opportunity and another person in the office who sits quietly and gets on with the work. The active employee has more visibility and, hence, takes advantage of more career development opportunities. This less aggressive behaviour may also lead to women having to perform to higher standards than men" (*A judge from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).
>
> "When moving up the judiciary career ladder, women tend to understate their achievements and apply less frequently to the top positions than men do. Despite good academic records, experience and high qualifications, women might lack the trust in themselves which is crucial for moving forward in any career" (*A judge from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

The common law jurisdictions that have recorded the largest increases in the number of women judges have usually made gender diversity on the bench a clear priority, set targets and actively recruited women. Alternatively, this can also occur if a particular governor, president or prime minister with the power to appoint judges prioritises a diverse and representative judiciary.

As for the different selection methods, recent studies on gender and judicial appointments continue to show no systematic effect (Reid, 2004; Williams, 2007; Reddick et al, 2009). Some studies claim that appointive systems enhance judicial diversity; other studies have reported that elective systems produce more women and minority jurists. However, the majority of these studies are based on the court's formal method of selection and do not take informal influences into account (Reddick et al., 2009). Whatever system exists, commitment by political leadership is essential to guarantee women's representation.

Policy measures towards a more gender equal judiciary

Improvements in female representation in the judiciary across OECD countries are partly a result of various policy measures that aim to achieve a more diverse pool of candidates or employees. Some of these measures are highlighted below.

Targeted actions to close representation gaps

To-date, efforts to "feminise the judiciary" have rarely included affirmative action targets, due to arguments over maintaining judicial legitimacy and autonomy, and the tradition of merit-based judicial appointments. Nevertheless, some countries are taking steps in that direction (see Box. 2.10). Unsurprisingly, the quota debate in the judiciary is neither conclusive, nor supported by sufficient evidence. There are also very differing

opinions on the quota law among academics, legal experts and judges. In fact, it is often the younger generation of professionals that opposes the quota law. The argument often relates to the potential of the quota to "devaluate (a) woman's professional contribution, creating the assumption that she was promoted only because of the quota" (OECD, 2014).

The OECD interviews revealed a number of different opinions and suggestions. Some lawyers felt that "the issue is not in numbers but in quality. Moreover, the quota cannot take account of a varying candidacy pool, since one year there are more qualified men to fill the positions and another year, there are more qualified women." It has been suggested to focus on changing management behaviour by "setting targets, reporting progress and championing success stories" or introducing only "a temporary quota to change the mentality and behaviour". Another suggestion included introducing a "diversity quota" for higher- and lower-level positions, which might encourage diversity at all levels. Regardless, all judges and experts underlined that gender balance should not overrule professionalism: "We are lawyers/judges first and secondly women or men."

Revising appointment strategies

The way public examinations are organised in the judiciary may not always support women's progression to the top. Hence, a transparent selection process can lead to a larger influx of women into the judiciary. For example, in Italy, the selection process is almost anonymous and examiners can only identify candidates during the oral examination, after the number of potential candidates has been drastically reduced. In addition, in line with EU statutory recommendations, the judicial selection commission is composed of at least one-third of women. As a result, women account for 63% of all new appointees in Italy.

Another important step in encouraging women to apply for high-ranking positions is ensuring that an open judicial seat is widely advertised. Active outreach and direct distribution of information is effective in ensuring that a wide cross-section of members of the bar knows about the opening (Torres-Spelliscy et al., 2010).

Although the evidence is not conclusive, some cases suggest that appointment commissions can be helpful in responding to judicial gender inequities (see Box 2.11). Commissions that are more diverse tend to nominate a more diverse group of candidates. A study based on five states in the United States supports this trend; however, partly due to the large range of commissions and selection methods, no clear conclusion on the relationship between the composition of nomination committees and the diversity of judicial appointments could be reached, based on research from over 30 US states (Thomas, 2005).

Box 2.11. **Appointment commissions (or committees)**

Some countries, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, established special judicial commissions that work to increase gender diversity in the pool of available candidates for judicial selection.

The independent appointment (or selection) commissions play a key role in the appointment process. Committees are responsible for assessing the qualifications of the lawyers who apply and selecting candidates for judicial office. The Committees are usually tasked with selecting candidates through fair and open competition from the widest range of eligible candidates. In order to ensure a diverse pool of judicial candidates, the Committees are often encouraged to make selections respecting diversity principles.

Box 2.11. **Appointment commissions (or committees)** *(continued)*

At the federal level in **Canada**, the issue of diversity in the judiciary was addressed through a combination of political leadership, appointment criteria, appointment committees and professional associations. Although there has been a pro-active approach to the appointment of women judges, it has not been formally mandated. In 1985, however, the federal Minister of Justice announced a new judicial appointment process requiring that "the judiciary should represent a broad cross-section of Canadian society. To achieve this, the appointment of women and individuals from cultural and ethnic minorities should be encouraged" (Thomas, 2005). Advisory committees to assess candidates for federal judicial appointment were encouraged to respect diversity and give due consideration to all legal experience, including non-mainstream legal experience.

In 1988, the Canadian province of Ontario established a Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee as a three-year pilot project. Legislation requires the composition of the Committee to reflect the diversity of Ontario's population. The members of the Committee are elected by various bodies to ensure its diversity. The Attorney General appoints seven lay members, two judges are appointed by the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice, one member is appointed by the Ontario Judicial Council, and three from the legal community are appointed by the Law Society of Upper Canada, the Ontario Bar Association and the County and District Law Presidents' Association, respectively. All members serve a term of three years and may be re-appointed.

The Attorney General of the province also personally wrote to all women lawyers in Ontario who had been at the bar for ten years or more to encourage them to consider applying for the judiciary. When the committee started its work, only 4% of provincially appointed judges in Ontario were women. Within two years, 32% of judges appointed pursuant to the Committee's recommendations were women; during the next two years, 46% of the judges appointed were women (Ibid).

In the **United Kingdom**, one of the driving forces behind the Judicial Appointments Commissions (JAC) was countering the impediments to women's judicial appointments and increasing the diversity of the pool available for judicial selection. The JAC is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body that selects candidates on merit for judicial office in courts and tribunals (up to and including the High Court) in England and Wales, and for some tribunals whose jurisdiction extends to Scotland or Northern Ireland.

By statute, all appointments have to be based on merit only, but the JAC has a responsibility to improve the diversity of the candidate pool. Diversity is taken into account only in the supply of candidates, but not in the selection. Moreover, selection processes are supportive of diverse candidates. The exam aims to help diverse candidates demonstrate their merit.

All JAC panel members undertake a training programme, which includes detailed equality and diversity training. Attention is also given to the gender and ethnic mix of the JAC selection panel. Moreover, to increase the pool of candidates, the JAC works with the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice to encourage applications for the judiciary from lawyers other than barristers.

Sources: Thomas, C. (2005), *Judicial Diversity in the United Kingdom and other Jurisdictions: A review of Research, Policies and Practices*, University of Birmingham, commissioned by The Commission for Judicial Appointments, United Kingdom Website of the UK Judicial Appointment Commission http://jac.judiciary.gov.uk.

The effectiveness of appointment commissions can be further increased by outlining clear recruitment standards and a diversity strategy for commission members and providing training on how to be effective interviewers (Torres-Spelliscy et al., 2010).

Flexible working arrangements

The lack of opportunities to implement flexible working practices (such as working away from the office, checking emails on the move, being employed on a part-time basis or arranging one's own working hours) is seen as a significant obstacle to women being able to progress up the judicial career ladder. The "long-hours culture", particularly in private practice, is often necessary access judicial positions; this is seen as one of the main obstacles to flexible work, including the emphasis on presenteeism (The Law Society, 2010). Moreover, working time flexibility, including part-time work, is an important factor for attracting and retaining female judges. For example, the UK government has made provisions to facilitate part-time work for judges in the High Court, the Court of Appeals and the UK Supreme Court, as well as to make career breaks within the judiciary more widely available. In particular, one of the nine posts being advertised for the Queen's Bench and Family Division is designated as suitable for flexible working arrangements (Judicial Appointment Commission, 2013). In the Netherlands, judges working part time have benefitted from the same legal position as full-time judges, which were mostly men, since the 1980s. In Italy judges who are mothers have been able to benefit for some time from flexible working hours until their children are three years old. Indeed, today's technology can enable flexible working schedules and tele-working, even for management positions, although such flexibilities should be encouraged for both fathers and mothers to avoid associating them with women only, which may lead to discriminatory practices.

Promoting family-friendly policies

The large disparity between men and women in top positions occurs to a large extent because of family responsibilities, which fall predominantly on women. Policies that encourage men and women to share the caring of children and elderly, accompanied by affordable high-quality care facilities, could give women more opportunities to advance in their careers. Furthermore, the structure of leave provisions may need to be adjusted to meet the needs of modern professions and lifestyles, also capitalising on the role of ICT. Such adjustments may include the introduction of part-time parental leave or finding new solutions for small and medium-sized (law) firms, since they bear high organisational costs if their employees take parental leave. In Italy, for example, the government provides fiscal relief (reducing the firm's social contribution payments and organisational support (allowing them to hire fixed-term workers) to smaller firms (Centro Risorso, Tutela delle lavoratrici madri: la maternita).

Changing the corporate culture and removing stereotypes in the legal profession

Success in the legal profession is often a pre-requisite to access judicial posts, particularly in common law countries. Education and training initiatives for managers, female employees and clients is essential to change behaviour. Managers need to be aware of possible unconscious bias, while women employees may need to understand that lack of action might be perceived differently than what they expect. According to one of the judges interviewed by the OECD "the development of business skills is an integral part of a success(ful) career". As such, providing support to women to enhance their business skills and encouraging greater self-confidence is important to facilitate the development

of women's careers. In addition, managing the expectations of clients and explaining that the desired diversity in a company can only be achieved if the pressure of immediate and constant availability is decreased can be another important step towards greater gender equality. Other factors – such as mentoring schemes, internship opportunities for law students in courts, addressing social stereotypes in schools and working with media to introduce positive female role models in judiciaries – can further support the achievement gender balance at all levels of the judicial profession (OECD, 2014).

Box 2.12. **Transparency in the judiciary selection process**

In many OECD countries, special efforts are being made to establish diverse appointment panels and to provide mechanisms to ensure a fair selection procedure. In the United States, the appointment of judges is realised in the presence of screening committees, various bar associations and representatives from different courts. Decisions have to be justified, and social pressure would make it difficult to realise political appointments.

In Austria, the appointment commission consists of five members and an Equal Opportunities official, who should also be a judge (*Gleichbehandlungsbeauftragte*). The Equal Opportunities official does not have a direct say in the selection process but gives his/her opinion regarding the selected candidate. If this official disagrees with the appointment commission, the panel needs to justify its choice.

Source: OECD (2014), *Survey on Gender Equality in Public Life in OECD Countries*.

Strengthening the role of national law associations

The evidence from countries with higher levels of women judges indicates that the strength and visibility of national women's law associations and their lobbying efforts often prove pivotal in encouraging governments to appoint women to judicial posts. Supporting the work of national bar organisations and international groups, such as the International Association of Women Judges, is vital to increasing the visibility of women judges; these groups counter attitudinal biases and patronage practices and encourage women's appointments. The visibility of women judges is also important in highlighting positive female role models, that is, successful senior women who demonstrate a healthy work-life balance (The Law Society, 2010). Indeed, according to the interviewed judges, "Networking is essential if you want to move up the ladder." Network members can provide support, share experiences and give moral support. Yet access to networks with both men and women is also critical given that: "if it is men who predominantly occupy the management positions, just relying on women's networks will not be sufficient" (*A judge from an OECD country* [OECD, 2014]).

Overall, despite women's progress in the judiciary in most OECD countries and the high number of women entering legal professions, the under-representation of women among senior judicial appointees remains a concern. The gender balance in the judiciary is disproportional in nearly all countries: women tend to be concentrated in lower-level courts and men in top ones. Yet, the representation of women judges at all judiciary levels (e.g. through mixed panels of judges) and courts is critical for a gender-sensitive application of the law.

The choice of policies to correct for judicial imbalances can be partly constrained by the independent status of the judiciary, as well as the organisational structure of the

legal profession. While there is no single model for increasing diversity at all levels of the judicial career, social support policies (e.g. care facilities and flexible leave) and equal sharing of family responsibilities among family members tend to be important factors that enable women to assume posts with high levels of responsibility. Further, evidence shows that establishing nominating or appointment commissions and promoting transparency in the selection process can help increase the number of female judges.

Since women are often successful at gaining entry into the legal profession but progress slowly into senior posts, re-visiting the corporate culture and working conditions, and introducing mentorship schemes, seem to be the necessary steps forward. Finally, regardless of the policies governments choose to apply, leadership and independent monitoring of outcomes are essential components to ensure the achievement of a more diverse judiciary.

Access to senior civil service

The public administration is responsible for the implementation of legislation and influences how political decisions actually affect the population. A government's performance therefore largely rests on the leadership capabilities, knowledge, and experience of senior civil servants (OECD, 2011c).

In most OECD countries, women represent 40% to 60% of the total labour force but are better represented in the central government workforce (OECD, 2009a). Women's employment in the public sector has contributed significantly to the overall increase of women in the labour force. Evidence shows a positive correlation between the size of the public sector and the share of female public employment in nearly all OECD countries (Anghel et. al., 2011).

Women's access to the most senior levels of the civil service remains elusive. Despite the growing share of women employed in central governments (see Figure 3.1), women remain under-represented in senior administrative or leadership positions. Generally, they are more highly represented at lower levels or in administrative posts (OECD, 2011a). This is notably due to the large supply of women in the public sector; in several OECD countries, women in the public sector are better educated than those in the private sector, on average (Anghel et. al., 2011).

Many governments recognise that diversity in the public service, including gender diversity, helps to achieve fairness, transparency, impartiality and representativeness, and improves the quality of service delivery through a better understanding of the citizenry (OECD, 2011a). Even though empirical evidence assessing the impact of diversity on public sector performance is weak, diversity signals the relevance of government and its credibility and raises good governance issues (OECD, 2011a). Some studies try to link diversity to government performance. A survey of 1 000 members of the US Government's Senior Executive Service found a direct relationship between the number of women working in an agency and that agency's willingness to advocate for women's issues (UNIFEM, 2009).

The European Commission identifies the importance of improving the representativeness of administrative institutions to support inclusive growth, sustainable development, human rights and good governance through a more inclusive approach to policy making, which reflects the views of main population groups. Women's access to decision-making positions, therefore, forms an important component of a whole-of-government approach to gender equality so that women can have equal opportunities to participate in agenda setting and prioritisation within the administrative state.

Even though the economic crisis has focused attention on costs, it should be viewed as an opportunity to diversify the leadership and management of the public services to maximise long-term performance outcomes (OECD, 2011a).

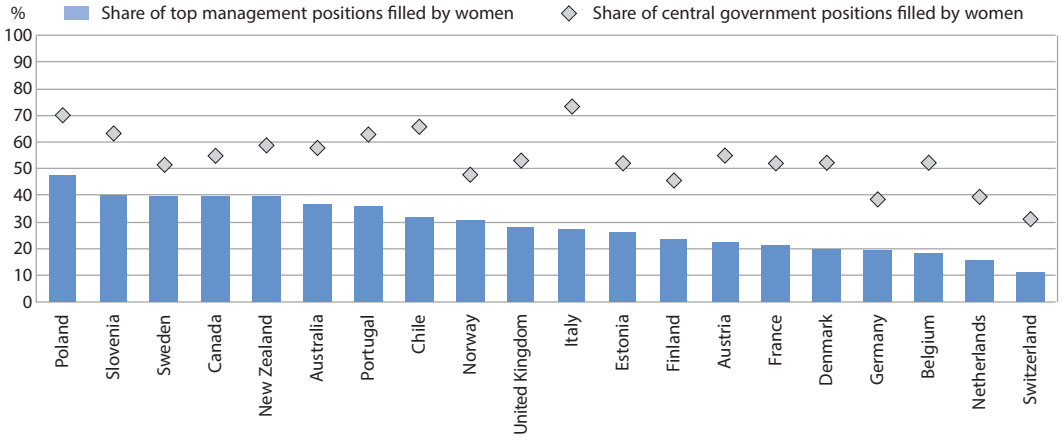
Women as senior officials in the public sector: plugging the leaky pipeline

While OECD countries are introducing policies aimed at increasing women's representation in the managerial ranks of the civil service, near-parity has only been reached in a minority of countries. On average, in OECD countries women occupy over 50% of central government jobs, but only 29% of top management positions in the 15 countries for which data is available (see Figure 2.8). These averages hide the cross-country variations: the highest share of women in top management positions (about 40%) is observed in Canada, New Zealand, Sweden and Slovenia, whereas this figure is more than halved in countries such as Belgium (near 20%) and Switzerland (close to 11%). Other data sources (OECD, 2009a) show that women account for over one-third of all senior civil service employees in New Zealand, Mexico and Portugal but represent less than 5% of senior managers in Korea and Japan.

EU data show that women occupy only 26% of the highest level of non-political administrative positions and 36% of second-level administrative positions. There are also large variations in the share of senior-level positions occupied by women (European Commission, 2014b). Six EU countries – Greece, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and Bulgaria – boast 43-53% of women in senior positions. Conversely, men still occupy 81.5-85.5% of senior civil service positions in Denmark, Ireland and Germany. In Turkey, women account for only 4% of the senior civil service.

If the findings for the two top-tier positions are considered separately, the picture changes slightly. In Slovakia, for example, women are under-represented at the top level at 23% but dominate the next level at 76%. More equitable representational patterns occur in Spain, Estonia, Romania, Slovenia, and Finland (OECD, 2009a).

Figure 2.8. **Women in top management positions compared to their share of posts in central government workforce (2010)**



Note: Data for Portugal, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Sweden is for 2011 rather than 2010. Data for France is for 2009 rather than 2010. Data for Estonia, Japan and Spain is for full-time employees only. Data for the Netherlands is in full-time equivalent.

Source: OECD (2013), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on OECD (2011), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*.

Even when women reach senior management positions, they are more likely to hold top positions in "soft" portfolio ministries such as socio-cultural ministries, as opposed to ministries of defence, justice, interior, and foreign affairs (International Parliamentary Union, 2008). This pattern is replicated in the United Arab Emirates where women's representation in the senior ranks of the public service stands at 29%. This is comparable to OECD member state levels, but women in these posts cluster in social service ministries.

Why does the leaky pipeline still exist?

In examining the reasons for limited gender balance at senior levels, debate has shifted from concerns about equal employment opportunity to an examination of the factors that prevent many women from reaching upper-level management positions. A multitude of factors may block the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality (rather than lack of competence or interest). These include exclusion from informal networks, stereotyping, lack of mentoring and promotion pathways, insufficient career development, shortage of role models, career breaks as a result of childcare leaves, childcare and elderly care cost and availability, commitment to personal or family responsibilities, limited accountability mechanisms for promotion of gender equality and limited opportunities for visibility. Some of the specific barriers to women's progress often relate to the following factors:

- ***Gendered culture of leadership.*** There is increasing evidence that policies which focus on achieving numerical targets for gender balance do not always address the underlying issue – barriers to equality of opportunity. These invisible barriers and unconscious biases, which can be present in both men and women, may prevent meritocratic systems from working efficiently. For example, unconscious biases may manifest in workplaces through the association of leadership and managerial roles with men rather than women. In fact, leadership potential is often described as requiring personal qualities such as strength, decisiveness and ambition, which can more readily be ascribed to men than women, rather than specific skills. Women displaying "male" characteristics may also face a backlash and be penalised for "un-stereotypical" traits (as people are more likely to have negative reactions to those who fall outside of their stereotypical expectations) (Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 2013). These trends can be observed in the public and private sectors. Indeed, evidence from the private sector shows that, across the globe, women's confidence to reach top management depends more on collective corporate culture than on individual factors. A global McKinsey and Company survey revealed that corporate culture is twice as important as individual mindsets in determining whether women believe they can succeed (McKinsey and Company, 2013).
- ***Work-life balance and double-burden syndrome***. As in all other employment areas, the difficulty of balancing work and family emerges as the most significant barrier. Even though the public sector usually provides better social conditions when moving through the ranks, long hours and less flexible work arrangements can impede women's progress, given that women tend to retain primary responsibilities for families and households. If there is an absence of back-up or family support structures, women often cannot work the long hours which may be required by managers while reconciling leadership responsibilities with family life. A recent Canadian study undertaken by the Zeno Group (which surveyed 1 000 female university graduates) reveals that young women are reluctant about top management

positions, since female top executives are seen as having to make larger personal sacrifices than men do (Zeno Group Canada, 2013).

- In particular, women in the "sandwich generation," or those who care for a child under the age of 18 while also caring for an elderly relative, face significant difficulty in fulfilling their responsibilities in the workplace while offering the necessary care to their families. Research indicates that women are the primary caretakers of their children and are most often the ones who stay home with a sick child, schedule their children's doctors' appointments and take care of organising follow-up care. Consequently, half (49%) of working mothers must miss work when their child is sick with a minor illness, such as a cold or ear infection, compared with 30% of working fathers (Noehren, 2011). This reinforces assumptions regarding women's availability to do a job without the interference of their family responsibilities, which may limit employers' incentives to invest in their career development. As the baby boomer population ages, this issue will impact working parents, families and public and private sectors even more. Hence, as emphasised elsewhere, policies that encourage fathers to take active part in caring responsibilities (including providing incentives to organisations and men to take parental leave and to engage in part-time employment) can facilitate women's ability to balance career and family responsibilities and reduce often-unconscious biases related to women's attachment to work. Sharing parental leave provisions between men and women may also reduce penalties to women's careers as a result of taking long breaks to care for children. Indeed, there is significant literature on the negative effects of extended childcare leaves on women's labour market outcomes, which often contributes to the significant lags in women's careers (OECD, 2012). This trend may be particularly pronounced in countries with very generous leave provisions (e.g. three years), as it is primarily women who make use of these leaves (OECD, 2012). Importantly, in a number of countries, such as Germany, the number of men taking parental leave is quickly rising. Another example from Germany is the growth of father's cafés where fathers go with children to meet other fathers (see Box 2.13).

Box 2.13. **The Väterzentrum Berlin**

The *Väterzentrum* Berlin is a centre established in 2007 that seeks to teach, inform and advise fathers on how to become more engaged parents, in order to benefit the family as a whole. It is a meeting place and information facility for fathers, their children and families, created in response to international scientific findings on infant psychology and the importance of an engaged father for the development of children and happy families. It offers space and opportunity to exchange, network, attend counselling services and participate in activities, events, courses and father groups.

Aside from its direct work with fathers and families, it also informs institutions and companies about the benefits of committed fatherhood. Furthermore, in collaboration with clinics in Berlin, it offers courses for expectant fathers and works with fathers in youth penal institutions. The *Väterzentrum* Berlin provides a nationwide training course for professionals, and the staff regularly publish articles in professional journals and books. Both the concept of the centre and its work are unique, with no similar facilities in Europe. In 2010, the Father Center Berlin had 4 000 visitors.

Source: The *Väterzentrum* Berlin centre's website: vaeterzentrum-berlin.de.

- ***Senior management appointment systems***. The appointment systems for top managers in the public sector differ across countries: appointments can be either political (e.g. in Austria, France, Germany, Spain and the United States) or merit-based (e.g. in Australia, Canada, Denmark and the United Kingdom). Political appointment implies a vacancy ultimately filled on the basis of trust, whereas merit-based appointment implies a candidate being chosen in accordance with a competitive institutionalised procedure. Other countries (e.g. Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia) combine elements of both these systems, i.e. combining competitive recruitment procedures with a final appointment by the government (Kuperus and Rode, 2008). While each appointment system has its strengths, the use of political appointments in recruiting for top echelons may limit women's access, since they are usually less present in informal networks.
- ***Career preferences***. Women's career progression might also falter because they often move into support functions (Human Resources or Administration) at the junior management level rather than into line-management functions that lead to more senior positions.
- ***Level of confidence and developmental opportunities***. Similar to the discussion on women parliamentarians and judges, differences in confidence and career ambition between men and women have been cited as factors preventing women from moving into senior and executive positions. An Institute of Leadership and Management study revealed that women managers are hampered in their careers by lower ambitions and expectations. Women often have limited self-confidence, which leads to less risk-taking and more cautious career choices. Indeed, a study conducted by the Harvard Business Review shows that lack of confidence and ambition in young women manifests itself when they enter the workforce. The study notes that women often apply for jobs when they perceive meeting at least four of five selection criteria, while men tend to do so if they perceive meeting only two. Failure to "ask" for opportunities is also cited as one of the ways that women unintentionally hurt their careers (Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 2013). Limited confidence may also be linked to low access to developmental opportunities and mentoring. A recent study from the US public sector identified a lack of mentoring, insufficient training and developmental assignments as significant impediments to many women's ability to attain higher-level and management positions in the federal public sector (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2011).
- ***Career breaks***. Career breaks as a result of extended childcare leaves or due to fiscal cuts, can undermine women's chances for career advancement. Moreover, cuts in public sector jobs, which primarily affect women, as they are often over-represented in public jobs, can result in the reduction of the pool of women who can be potential leaders in the public sector; this may widen gender gaps at the top.

Supporting women in reaching and succeeding in top management positions

In all OECD member countries, governments have adopted Anti-Discrimination Laws to ensure equal employment opportunities for women and minorities. Regardless of such action, in most countries, wage gaps and the continuous under-representation of these groups in senior positions continue. The results of the *2011 OECD Survey on Gender in Public Employment* (see Figure 3.6 for more detail) show that most countries legally guarantee pay equality and pay equity, undertake regular assessments of the gender

balance of the government workforce or establish independent complaint/disciplinary commissions. Despite these measures, inequalities in terms of female representation and pay remain, especially at the senior management level.

Some of the policy responses implemented by governments to improve diversity are outlined below.

Advancing monitoring and accountability

Monitoring and accountability are essential to ensure policy effectiveness. The assessment of results and the evaluation of policy outcomes must be embedded in any policy measure. The experience of Australia, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and New Zealand shows that surveys, interviews, reviews, opinion polls and benchmarking are effective methods for obtaining and analysing data on diversity policies. In Australia and New Zealand, organisations participate in surveys and integrate equality and diversity issues into strategic performance reporting. In Norway, the Ministry of Government Administration examines the activities and results of all government agencies. Diversity measures in Finland (Diversity Barometer) and the Netherlands (Diversity Index) provide useful information on attitudes towards diversity and measure the degree of diversity in the national labour market, across sectors or geographical areas (OECD, 2011b). Monitoring and evaluation keep issues in the spotlight and motivate policy makers to respond appropriately. These efforts should be accompanied by robust accountability structures at all levels of the public service to ensure gender balance in the public sector workforce at all levels (see Chapter 3 for more discussion). Sound monitoring and accountability systems can identify issues particularly affecting women employees, women civil servants and women senior civil servants. In Canada, Employment Equity legislation monitors levels of representativeness in the federal public service across four designated categories (women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities and visible minorities) and measures success according to workforce availability. Since Canadian women now constitute 42.6% of the executive level of the federal public service (an increase from 28.4% in 2000) and 55.1% of the civil service overall, this development has sparked debates about whether women should now be removed as a designated category from the Employment Equity legislation that facilitated their rise through the civil service ranks (May, 2010).

Raising awareness within the public service

Another (rather indirect) measure is raising awareness about gender issues within the public sector as an employer. Public managers might not recognise that men and women are treated differently. In Mexico, for example, equal opportunities for women are promoted through programmes that institutionalise a gender perspective within the public administration. In 2004, Switzerland introduced an integral approach for gender equality. The published guidelines for considering women and men as equal federal employees ensure that all projects and measures give the same advantage to men and women. Japan also introduced programmes to enhance and promote gender equality policies to avoid gender discrimination in public employment. Even though this policy does not directly affect the number of women in senior management, raising awareness and bringing the issue into focus can help to shift the organisational culture in the public sector and encourage the acceptance of more women in management positions. Moreover, specific strategies can help address unconscious bias (Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 2013). These include generating evidence to identify triggers for bias, providing personal development support to employees to deal with unconscious bias and

examining organisational systems, processes and cultural norms to ensure that they do not inadvertently reinforce unhelpful unconscious habits. A gender-balanced management team can also help break stereotypes about women leaders, as well as provide inspiration for other women.

In addition, engaging men can help to further break down stereotypes related to women's leadership roles. For example, in 2010, the Australian Human Rights Commissioner was instrumental in bringing together some of Australia's most influential and diverse male CEOs and Chairpersons to establish the "Male Champions of Change group." The objective of the group was to use their individual and collective influence and commitment to ensure that the issue of women's representation in leadership was elevated on the national business agenda.[11] In its most recent report "Accelerating the advancement of women in leadership: Listening, Learning, Leading", the group identified a set of actions that leaders can take to "change the game", which fall into four themes:

- *Stepping up as leaders*, which invites members of the group to reflect on their own leadership and the signals they send about women and gender balance in their organisations; to take action to ensure that their teams are effective in bringing together different points of view; and to actively develop, promote and advance inclusive leaders across their organisations.
- *Creating accountability* through deepening gender reporting and breaking entrenched patterns by engaging managers to add at least one woman to their teams.
- *Disrupting the status quo* by asking '50/50: If not, why not?' across career lifecycles, from recruitment and talent development to committees and panels; understanding the types of experiences required by the organisations and ensuring that women get critical experiences in 'hot jobs;' and reflecting on work patterns and "what it takes to succeed" in their organisation.
- *Dismantling barriers for carers* through encouraging returns following childcare leaves and making the transitions easy; studying the evidence on women's career patterns following their returns from leave and supporting an expansive review of caring, including childcare options (Male Champions of Change Australia, 2013).

Strengthening transparency in the recruitment processes

Strengthening transparency and meritocracy in recruiting processes may support increases in the number of women in senior positions by enabling qualified candidates to compete for senior jobs. In addition, some countries introduced measures that would give preference to an equally qualified woman over a man to correct for female under-representation (see Chapter 3). Others introduced a strong preferential selection process (where gender is itself a selection criterion). The Chilean *Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública* (ADP), a central senior civil service system, was established to recruit a professional senior management, with hiring based on public competition. The ADP system is believed to have contributed to a rise in women in senior positions (OECD, 2011b). In Belgium, the recruitment agency of the Belgian Government, *SELOR*, issues tickets to candidates based on competencies rather than diplomas. Then the Ministry of Public Administration determines the job for which the ticket is valid. Linking selection criteria for positions with job performance can help ensure the ability to tap into the largest possible pool of talent (Committee for Economic Development in Australia, 2013). In New Zealand, another active recruitment strategy is used (see Box 2.14).

Box 2.14. New Zealand's stocktaking of gender balance in state sector boards and committees

The government of New Zealand is committed to gender balance on its state sector boards and committees. To achieve this, the Government has a target of achieving a 45% participation of women on state sector boards and committees, and, to support this, the Ministry of Women's Affairs runs an extensive Nominations Service and database of women candidates. The service identifies suitable women candidates for nominations to state sector board vacancies on a bespoke basis and provides support, advice and tools to women to support them in developing governance careers.

There has been significant progress in the past 20 years. Women now represent just over 41% of directors and committee members on state sector boards and committees, compared to 25% in 1993. There are still some differences in sectors, with a higher representation of women on social development, health and community boards.

The Gender Stocktake of state sector boards and committees is undertaken annually by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The stocktake counts the participation rate of women on state sector boards and committees as of the end of December each year. It represents the result by gender of all appointments made to state sector boards and committees that are required to be considered by the Cabinet Appointment and Honours Committee (APH) or other Cabinet committees and appointments made by the Governor-General on the recommendation of a Minister.

Source: Ministry of Women's Affairs, New Zealand, http://mwa.govt.nz.

Providing leadership development and mentoring opportunities

On the supply side, the argument persists that the lack of women in management positions is due to an insufficient supply of qualified women. The experience in many countries shows that there is usually a large pool of women candidates, but they need to be actively recruited (i.e. managers need to approach them for promotion) or supported through trainings that aim to increase the number of women with the required skills and experience to be eligible for senior roles. In addition, the experience of the Australian public and private sectors has demonstrated that mentorship and sponsorship of skilled women are very important for women's success. In particular, sponsorship whereby senior men or women advocate for someone is seen as critical to breaking through. Such "supply-oriented" strategies focus on the processes through which women are selected, developed and promoted to senior levels in an organisation. To effectively apply these strategies, managers need to be equipped with diversity management tools (see Box 2.15). Different career tracking and leadership development programmes have also been implemented in Australia, Belgium, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. In the United States, the US Department of State and five leading women's colleges launched the *Women in Public Service Project* (WPSP). The aim of WPSP is to advance women in leadership positions in governments and civic organisations worldwide.[12] In Finland, the *Female Managers Career Advancement* programme encourages women to participate in management training and trained supervisors to recognise women's management abilities. Leadership programmes are more effective when undertaken jointly for both men and women, since this provides a better chance for women to gain confidence and for men to be more accepting of female leaders.

Box 2.15. **Sweden's "The State Leads Equally" programme**

In 2009, Sweden launched a career development programme for women called *Staten leder jämt* (The State Leads Equally), with a strong focus on raising awareness among managers. The overall aim of this three-year programme was to increase the percentage of women in management and expert roles in the central administration (20 government agencies participated in the training) and thus to help reduce the pay gap between women and men.

Those agencies that participated in the programme reported improved gender balance at senior management levels. Apart from training, the programme also ensured that agencies developed clear goals, strategies and measures for operational planning in an effort to create sustainable and long-lasting positive effects. Lessons to be drawn from the Swedish experience include the active involvement of senior management teams; the use of indicators and the establishment of clear objectives and strategies; and the promotion of awareness about gender issues among all staff members. The Swedish programme proposed e-learning as an awareness-building tool. Overall, political commitment has proven to be an important success component. Instructions and letters of regulation issued by the government were a high incentive for agencies to participate in this career development training.

Source: Krus (2012), *Women's Career Advancement within the Swedish Central Administration: Final Report*, Swedish Council for Strategic Human Resources Development, Stockholm, available at www.krus.nu.

In the public sector, mentoring and coaching programmes have also been used to ensure that more women reach top positions. In order to accelerate the take-up of higher management positions by women, Austria created the Cross Mentoring Programme. Since 2007, 40-50 couples comprised of a female public employee (mentoree) of one ministry and a female or male manager (mentor) from another ministry have been formed through e-matching. The personnel developers of all Federal Ministries support this programme by organising at least four meetings of mentors and their mentorees, introductory workshops, networking meetings and evaluations. The reported benefits of this programme include: networking opportunities; encouragement for career advancement; systematic transfer of knowledge and know-how; and better self-assessment.

Implementing work-life balance schemes at the top

Even if promoted, women may find it more difficult to reconcile work and family life, given that they most often serve as primary caretakers. In this regard, flexible work and part-time arrangements, parental leave policies and child and elderly care systems are essential to support women's career advancement. Yet, although flexible work arrangements frequently exist in the public sector (see Chapter 3), it is often more difficult to benefit from them at the senior level, as senior managers are generally expected to work long hours and be present in the work place. This is one of the significant reasons for women's under-representation in the highest management positions. In recognition of this challenge, some countries have introduced work-life balance policies specifically targeting senior management (see Box 2.16).

Even when flexible work and work-life balance programmes are introduced at the senior level, encouraging both men and women to take advantage of them is essential to their effectiveness. Indeed, recent research shows that while many men with families show an interest in greater work-life balance, they tend to be reluctant to use flexible arrangements at

work, which is seen as having the potential to adversely influence their career and as more of "women's work". Such an often-unconscious association of flexible work with women, and possibly with low commitment or ambition, may limit the willingness of managers to promote female employees to more senior positions. Furthermore, the historical way of organising the work (e.g. nine-to-five) may no longer be fully responsive to the needs of double-income households, which still have childcare and household responsibilities. The challenges of changing the workplace culture at the senior levels may discourage women from applying for more senior posts, which may, in turn, hamper the ability of public services to attract and retain the most competent people. In addition, encouraging men to share parental leaves, flexible work arrangements and care responsibilities throughout their careers (not only at senior levels) may reduce the penalties on women's careers associated with childcare and eldercare breaks, thus allowing women to progress to more senior levels.

Box 2.16. **Policies to support work-life balance in senior management positions**

Key factors influencing work-life balance are the length of the working day and week, working time flexibility or arrangements, and leave conditions. Work-life balance is an important element in an organisation, especially if the goal is for more women to reach the highest positions (Kuperus and Rode, 2008).

Part-time work, although rarely possible for senior public sector positions, is practiced in **Estonia, the Netherlands** and **Sweden**. In **Estonia,** the possibility for senior civil servants to work part-time depends on the agency in which they are employed, but it is generally possible if there is agreement with a direct supervisor. In **Sweden,** part-time work is possible for family reasons, and the legislation applies to both senior civil servants and general civil servants. In **the Netherlands**, part-time work at the higher levels mostly means 28-32 hours per week, which makes it possible to work at least four days per week for seven to eight hours. Moreover, in **Sweden**, a special arrangement called *"*working time based on trust*"* has been introduced. Under this arrangement, senior civil servants can make their own decisions on working time. The restriction is that managers working under this arrangement cannot be compensated for overtime, as they do not have fixed working hours.

Source: Kuperus, H. and A. Rode (2010), "Latest trends in Top Public Management in the European Union", EIPASCOPE 2010/1.

Setting targets

Government action plans with gender equality targets are important fast-tracking tools that signal the political priority of achieving gender equality and allow for the tracking of women's progress into the senior ranks (see Box 2.17). One of the major concerns with targets is that they are seen as possibly leading to "tokenism" by appointing unqualified women (although the number of experienced and qualified women in the middle management in the public sector makes such tokenism unlikely). Nonetheless, targets are often seen as more "acceptable" than quotas to improve female representation in top jobs, given that they can be more adaptable to local conditions than quotas and that they often represent a voluntary commitment to gender diversity. For such targets to be effective, they "need to be specific, challenging, accompanied by mechanisms for accountability and reward, aligned with a corporate-level diversity strategy, and assigned at the same levels as targets for budgets and performance."[13] Moreover, strong political will and strict

enforcement rules seem to be necessary. Overall, targets can yield the expected results if there is a sufficient pool of women in the talent pipeline who can potentially become senior managers. Some countries actually base target setting on the workforce availability of candidates who could meet the required profiles of managers. In fact, data from OECD countries indicate that there are female middle managers in the pipeline, which may provide an opportunity to close gender gaps at the top level, given the ageing of the public service. Yet, only a small number of surveyed OECD countries employ gender/diversity targets in management performance agreements (see Chapter 3).

Overall, evidence shows that diversity measures, including the representation of women, improve the quality of public services by making the best use of the available talent pool and offering a better understanding of citizens' needs. Often, however, women remain largely excluded from important decision-making processes in the public sector. Governments of OECD member countries are taking action to address this issue by implementing various policies ranging from affirmative action to training and awareness-building programmes.

Box 2.17. **Setting targets to increase gender balance in senior public sector posts**

The **United Kingdom**'s strategy for promoting equality and diversity aims to increase the representation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled staff in the senior civil service and top management posts. The goal is to reach 34% of female staff in top management posts and 39% in the senior civil service within five years (an increase from 26.6% and 32.1% respectively in 2007) (UK Cabinet Office, 2008).

In **France,** women represent nearly 60% of employees in the public service, but hold only 14% of management and 24% of senior management positions. In order to improve the situation, the National Assembly voted for a progressive 40% quota for nominated top civil servants by 2018. The increase will be enforced gradually and on an annual basis: a minimum of 20% (of each gender) of new appointments in 2013-15, 30% in 2015-17 and 40% in 2018. The National Assembly shall determine the penalties for non-compliance, as well as the list of jobs affected by the new quota (Guégot, 2011).

Targets in the public sector have also been implemented in **Austria**. The Federal Equal Treatment Act contains provisions on affirmative action and the promotion of women, which oblige all employers to eliminate the existing under-representation of women. Under-representation is defined as having a share of women at a particular job level. Ministers must pass affirmative action plans for their ministries every six years, and these plans have to include binding targets to raise women's representation. The quota applies only to top positions in the public sector for equally qualified candidates (EU report, 2011, and OECD survey, 2014).

Moreover, **Greece** has implemented one-third neutral gender quotas for public institutions, as well as for national commissions in the field of research and technology, provided that candidates are adequately qualified (General Secretariat for Gender Equality of Greece).

Sources: UK Cabinet Office (2014), www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office; Guégot, F. (2011), L'égalité professionnelle homme-femme dans la Fonction publique", available at www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/114000123/index.shtml*;* European Commission (2012), Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130530_annual_report_en.pdf; QuotaProject: Global Database of Quotas for Women (2014), Greece, www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=GR; General Secretariat for Gender Equality of Greece (2010), *Our Goal: Substantive Gender Equality National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013*, Greece; OECD (2014), *Survey on Gender Equality in Public Life in OECD Countries.*

Importantly, tackling unconscious biases and stereotypical attitudes about gender roles in society (e.g. associating women with greater absenteeism as a result of care responsibilities) is among the critical factors to strengthen women's representation in senior jobs.

Women's participation in trade unions and civil society

Women's participation in civil society organisations, including women's groups, is well recognised across OECD countries at both the national and local levels. Usually, women face fewer restrictions in accessing leadership posts in civil society organisations dealing with women, children and family issues. These organisations play a critical role in increasing awareness of women's legal rights and other issues that affect women, such as conflict, globalisation, information technology, the environment, education and health care. Moreover, the non-governmental sector is an important employer of women.

For example, there are 856 000 civil society organisations in the United Kingdom employing an estimated 1.37 million people, amounting to 6.4% of the total UK workforce, 69% of which are women, with 46% of chief executives, primarily in smaller NGOs (Women's Resource Centre, 2008). Similarly, in Canada, according to surveys of non-profit employers (organisations) and employees in 2007-08, the non-profit sector accounted for more than 7% (1.2 million people) of the overall Canadian workforce, and 76% of employees and 68% of managers in the non-profit sector were female (as compared to 47.5% and 36% in the private sector).[14] Yet, there is still a pay gap between women and men working in NGOs. For example, the gender pay gap in NGOs in the United Kingdom was 23% in 2001. In addition, salaries in female-dominated non-profit sectors tend to be lower than in other sectors, which makes it challenging to retain skilled employees and managers.

When formal channels to power and decision making are difficult for women to access, collective action through social partners, civil society organisations and the media becomes even more crucial to advancing gender equality and providing women with opportunities to hone leadership skills and develop professional networks. As such, activity in civil society organisations can even provide a springboard to electoral politics. Women's involvement in the civil society sector can build their leadership capacity, while offering a more informal, flexible and accommodating environment. Women can participate in policy debates across a range of political, social, economic and environmental social partner organisations. Through women's movements, in particular, women can champion gender equality by generating public debates and mobilising for policy reforms both within national contexts and internationally.

Trade unions play a key role in ensuring that the overall working environment in the public sector supports more balanced participation by women and men. In the last decade, trade unions have become more feminised, driven by a growing proportion of women in employment. In Europe, women's union membership has slowly risen from 44.1% in 2008 to 46.4% in 2012, despite the general contraction of union membership.[15] Yet, the trend towards gender-balanced memberships has not translated into better gender distribution in decision-making positions within trade unions. Indeed, women remain under-represented on the main executive committees of most union confederations.[16] In Europe, according to the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), only 7% of the top trade union positions are occupied by women.[17] Only in Nordic countries, the number of women delegates to national general committees or councils reflects their memberships.[18] Moreover, when women hold a leadership capacity, they are more likely to be in a deputy position or to lead

a department regarded as more feminine such as women and gender issues, or training and education (ETUC, 2006).

As in other sectors, the main impediments to women's participation in union decision-making structures include gender-specific life situations, which dissuade women from pursuing demanding trade union activities. Pre-conceived ideas and stereotypes about the role of women, as well as the masculinised culture of trade unions, may further hold women back.

OECD countries are already taking steps to close the remaining gaps, which often mirror those in the political sphere, including:

- *Gender equality quotas*: Quotas and other positive action initiatives, such as selected seats, directly impact women's participation in decision-making structures; this is evidenced in Belgium (Confederation of Christian Trade Unions) and France (French Democratic Work Confederation). In Italy, the General Confederation of Labour instituted voluntary reforms to raise women's representation from 21% in 1991 to 40% in 2006, and now the organisation is on the verge of reaching gender parity (Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, 2011). German unions have adopted constitutional provisions to establish quotas for proportional representation in leadership.
- *Gender mainstreaming*: Trade unions and organisations such as ETUC are introducing measures to actively promote gender equality at all levels and aiming to reduce the gender representation gap in decision-making bodies. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), for example, is seeking to achieve a 30% representation of women in decision-making bodies and a 5% increase in women's membership by 2018 (ITUC, 2007). Moreover, Sweden has developed one of the most sophisticated gender mainstreaming programmes in the adoption of resolutions and policies taking gender perspective into account at all levels of the trade union structure, through all trade union actions and through the involvement of women in decision making. It has also implemented specific gender mainstreaming impact measurement tools. Since 1989, Japan's Rengo has developed initiatives to realise gender equality in trade unions, including introducing transitional measures for women's participation in central executive committees and other decision-making bodies. Rengo's fourth Action Plan (2013-20) currently aims to ensure that 100% of organisations elect women as union officials by 2017.
- *Gender research and data collection*: Data collections on women's participation are recent, and allow for better women's representation and increased monitoring of their visibility. Since 2007, ETUC's affiliates and European Industry Federations provide statistics regarding membership and representation in their executive committees. The ETUC further carries out an annual 8 March Survey to assess progress in reducing the gender representation gap and highlighting successful gender mainstreaming activities. In the United Kingdom, the Trade Union Confederation conducted two Equality Audits between 2003 and 2007 to survey unions' structure, policies and services.
- *Mentoring and leadership development programmes*: These programmes aim to prepare women to carry out trade union activity while encouraging greater participation in leadership positions. In the United Kingdom, 35% of the trade unions affiliated with the TUC take steps to encourage women's involvement in training courses, and Teachers' Union of Ireland recommends specific training courses to improve women's confidence and build capacity in negotiation and

speaking skills. Moreover, a mentoring programme ensures that potential women candidates are identified and supported to take on leadership roles and positions of responsibility.

- *Policies to address barriers to women's leadership*: These measures aim at eliminating impediments hindering women's access to decision-making structures, as well as gender discrimination against potential women leaders. They include, notably, regulating the timing of meetings and balancing trade unions' activities with other commitments.
- *Creation of Women's Committees, Equality Commissions*: These bodies have the power to take initiative and input directly into decision making. For example, in Canada, union women reacted to their lack of representation on the national executive committee by forming women-only committees to influence overall union agendas, and campaigning successfully for affirmative action positions on union executive committees.

To summarise, leadership quotas and voluntary measures for women, training programmes for potential women leaders, efforts to reverse male-dominated organisational culture, public awareness campaigns and action plans to improve gender balance are some of the initiatives that can be launched by social partners and NGOs in OECD and partner countries to address women's under-representation in senior positions in social partner and other non-governmental organisations.

Some evidence shows that women are more effective inside political institutions when they enjoy the support of women mobilising on the outside. A UNDP report notes that "women and others interested in deepening democratic institutions are also active in educating voters, advocating for the passage of laws, creating networks and channelling information about gender equality issues into the political system. Increasingly, civil society groups have helped prepare women for political positions, especially in local government" (UNDP, 2010). As such, the civil society sector continues to be an important vehicle for women's leadership, and a vital source of policy debate and innovation on many aspects of gender equality.

Key policy recommendations

Breaking the glass ceiling in politics

- ✓ *Consider measures to close representation gaps in parliament and the political executive*. Introduce or encourage comprehensive transitional or correctional regulatory or voluntary measures to rationalise the nomination and election process in order to increase female representation.
- ✓ *Introduce family-friendly practices*. Review internal procedures of parliamentary bodies and promote gender-sensitive structures and working conditions in elected office; reconsider traditional working hours; facilitate access to care facilities and develop schemes to support the balancing of family and professional obligations.
- ✓ *Facilitate capacity development, mentoring and other training programmes for women in politics.* Media and awareness-raising campaigns about female leaders and the active involvement of civil society can help reduce stereotypes.

Getting to the top in the judiciary

- ✓ *Promote diverse composition of decision-making bodies on judicial appointments*. Ensure that judicial appointment commissions are diverse, and that commission members undergo gender-sensitive and diversity recruitment training.
- ✓ *Ensure the transparency of judicial appointments*. Ensure transparency in judicial selection processes through open competition, clear recruitment standards, and wide advertisement of open judicial seats.
- ✓ *Actively encourage women*. Arrange active recruitment of potential women judges by directly approaching women lawyers and informing them about available vacancies.
- ✓ *Promote family-friendly practices in the judiciary,* including policies that encourage men and women to share family responsibilities.

Women in public-sector leadership and public life

- ✓ *Promote merit-based recruitment and open competition* at senior levels in the public sector to allow for greater transparency and to tap into the largest possible talent pool.
- ✓ *Develop mechanisms that improve gender balance in leadership positions*, such as target-setting for senior managers (e.g. based on workforce availability of women in certain occupations) and anti-discriminatory policies.
- ✓ *Facilitate leadership development opportunities*, including access to leadership development programmes, mentorship, coaching and other development opportunities for both men and women to prepare the candidates for management positions.
- ✓ *Promote gender-sensitive trade unions* to eliminate the gender representation gap in trade union decision-making bodies, including the implementation of gender mainstreaming in trade union activities and the introduction of (transitional) positive action measures.

Leadership, accountability and workplace culture

- ✓ *Develop clear governance and accountability mechanisms* to deal with gender equality issues in workplaces across public organisations.
- ✓ *Advance independent monitoring of outcomes* by developing independent monitoring mechanisms and measurements to track and evaluate changes in the representation of women over time.
- ✓ *Encourage culture change* by creating awareness-raising programmes and training initiatives on equal opportunities to achieve changes in work culture among the public and promote a greater acceptance of women leaders. This would require the active engagement of men and raising awareness about conscious and unconscious biases that influence perception, judgement and behaviour around what constitutes merit.
- ✓ *Establish effective work-life balance measures at the top*. Make flexible work arrangements and other work-life balance enablers (e.g. maternity and parental leave, childcare facilities) available to senior managers, regardless of gender and family status. Promote shared responsibility between men and women in paid and unpaid work. This could help break down stereotypical gender role barriers embedded in workplace culture and counter the association of flexibility with women.
- ✓ *Highlight female role models*. Use a range of traditional and social media to highlight successful women representatives, providing examples and encouragement to other women, and breaking down existing stereotypes.

Notes

1. See, for example: Chattopadhyay and Dufflo (2004); Volden et al. (2013); Anzia and Berry (2011); Volden and Wiseman (2011).
2. For more on women elected officials' preferences and performance, see: Anzia, S. and C. Berry (2011), "The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen?" *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3):478-93; Poggione, S. (2004), "Exploring Gender Differences in State Legislators' Policy Preferences," *Political Research Quarterly* 57:305-14; Tolbert, C. J. and G. A. Steuernagel (2001), "Women Lawmakers, State Mandates and Women's Health," *Women & Politics* 22(1):1-39; Norton, N. (1999), "Uncovering the Dimensionality of Gender Voting in Congress," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24(1):65-86; Swers, M. L. (1998), "Are Congresswomen More Likely to Vote for Women's Issue Bills than Their Male Colleagues?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 23:435-48; Kathlene, L. (1995), "Alternative Views of Crime: Legislative Policymaking in Gendered Terms," *Journal of Politics* 57(3):696-723; Thomas, S. (1992), "The Effects of Race and Gender on Constituency Service," *Western Political Quarterly* 45:161-80.
3. For example, in the 2004 presidential election, 60.1% of women and 56.3% of men voted, which represents 67.3 million women and 58.5 million men (a difference of 8.8 million), womensissues.about.com/od/thepoliticalarena/a/GenderVoting.htm.
4. For more information, see University College Dublin (n.d.), "Gender, Electoral Turnout and Abstention in Europe", www.ucd.ie/civicact/gender.ppt.

5. In a closed list in PR systems, voters vote for the party and therefore the party list as a whole. Candidates are elected in the order they appear on the list (as decided by the party) until all seats have been filled.

6. In an open list in PR systems, voters choose individual candidates from the list provided by each party and individual candidates are elected according to the popular vote.

7. The level of representation of women in OECD countries that use voluntary quotas includes Turkey (14%); Lithuania (24%); Luxembourg (20%); the Netherlands (39%); Norway (40%); Slovakia (19%); South Africa (42%); Sweden (45%); Switzerland (28%); the Czech Republic (22%); Hungary (9%); Iceland (40%); Israel (22%); Italy (31%); Canada (25%); Chile (14%); Germany (36.5%); Australia (25%); Austria (28%); UK (22%).

8. Campaigns for gender quotas in the United Kingdom go back more than 20 years. In 1993, the Labour Party adopted the controversial form of all-women shortlists (AWS), which required certain districts to consider shortlists consisting entirely of women. This policy was declared illegal in 1996. In 2002, the Sex Discrimination Act was amended and AWS were re-introduced, set to expire in 2015 unless an order was made to the contrary. In 2008, a Speaker's Conference was established by the House of Commons to make recommendations for rectifying the political under-representation of women, ethnic minorities, and disabled people. In response to its recommendations, the Labour government extended the use of AWS to 2030; the new Equality Act that came into force in 2010 allows parties to reserve places on electoral lists for other groups that are under-represented in politics. Source: European Parliament (2011) "Electoral Gender Quota Systems and their implementation in Europe", prepared by the Directorate General for Internal Policies.

9. National Association of Women Judges, the American bench: www.nawj.org/us_state_court_statistics_2012.asp.

10. In common law countries, barristers usually specialise in courtroom advocacy and giving expert legal opinions, while solicitors tend to do transactional-type legal work and interact with clients.

11. For further information, see www.humanrights.gov.au/male-champions-change.

12. See the Women in Public Service Project (2014), http://womeninpublicservice.wilsoncenter.org/about-us/.

13. Committee for Economic Development of Australia (2013), "Women in Leadership: Understanding the gender gap", available at www.ceda.com.au/media/310731/cedawiljune%202013final.pdf.

14. For more information, see HR Council for the Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector (2008), "Toward a Labour Force Strategy for Canada's Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector", www.hrcouncil.ca/about/documents/LFS_R2_web_001.pdf.

15. For more information, see 5th Annual European Trade Union Confederation 8 March Survey, 2012.

16. Overall, out of 43 presidents only four were women, out of 74 vice presidents 28 were women, out of 40 secretaries general ten were women, and out of 18 deputy secretaries general only six were women.

17. European Trade Union Confederation (2010), "From membership to leadership: How to advance women in decision-making positions in trade unions", www.etuc.org/press/membership-leadership-how-advance-women-decision-making-positions-trade-unions#.Uw2iuqlDseg.

18. For more information, see 5th Annual European Trade Union Confederation 8 March Survey, 2012.

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Annex 2.A1

Categories for Table 2.1

Quota Type	This category describes where the legislated quota is being applied: in the Single/Lower House Parliament, the Upper House and/or the Sub-national level.
Quota Level	This category specifies the level stipulated by the quota legislation, i.e. proportion of women on a party's candidates list.
Other Quota	This category depicts whether voluntary party quotas exist in the country as well.
Electoral system	This depicts the election system in the country. In the case of PR systems, the table distinguishes countries that use open and closed party lists. Moreover, for each country, the existence or absence of placement mandates (i.e. how women are placed on the party lists) for the national level in Single/Lower House is indicated.
Penalty	This category outlines whether non-compliance with quota legislation is penalised or not. Enforcement mechanisms include, for example, financial penalties or exclusion from elections.
Electoral statistics	These measures show the number of women elected in the last election and in the election following introduction of the quota. The year of the first election after introduction of the quota is also indicated.
# of parties	Depicts the number of parties in the current Parliament (Lower/Single).

Chapter 3

Women as public employees

The public sector is an important source of employment in all OECD countries and women are generally well represented among public employees. This chapter discusses women's employment in the public sector in OECD and partner countries, based on empirical evidence from the 2011 OECD Survey on Gender in Public Employment *and OECD research. Specifically, it highlights employment and occupational patterns of women in the public sector, their contractual arrangements and their average earnings as compared to men. The influence of the economic downturn on gender equality in the public sector is also explored. Despite notable progress, women remain overrepresented in lower pay and part-time jobs and tend to experience more frequent career breaks, which may lead to lower pay positions and fewer career development opportunities. To respond to the highlighted challenges, the chapter identifies a set of good practices and actionable policy recommendations, such as equality acts, gender diversity targets and quotas, family friendly policies and training programmes, in the public service. Finally the chapter emphasises the importance of collecting good quality gender disaggregated data for developing sound policy solutions and outlines key policy recommendations for governments to enable equal access to opportunities in the public sector, reduce the pay gap and improve working conditions.*

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Key findings

- Women are well represented in OECD countries' public sectors; yet, they tend to be over-represented in contractual employment, lower job categories, and part-time work.
- Although the public sector exhibits lower horizontal occupational segregation and gender pay gaps than the private sector, gender differences in occupations and pay still persist. Similar to the private sector, the gender pay gap in the public sector is lower for younger workers and is higher at the upper end of the income distribution.
- Governments are taking active steps to ensure equal opportunities for their male and female employees. Evidence suggests that governments that have taken proactive measures to ensure equal opportunity and gender balance *are* making progress in closing gender-representation gaps in the public sector.
- While public sectors tend to offer more attractive social packages and work-life balance schemes than the private sector, significant variations across OECD countries exist. Persistent gaps remain in access to childcare and elderly care support. Countries are increasingly taking steps to address stereotypes and unconscious and conscious biases against women, and encourage men to assume an equal share of unpaid responsibilities, including parental leave.

Introduction

Women have made significant progress in labour market participation in most OECD and many non-OECD, countries. This is mainly due to increased educational attainment, which has led to higher employment outcomes for women. However, the increased labour market participation of women has not translated into a significant reduction of gender employment inequalities: gender segregation in economic activities persists, as do inequalities in employment opportunities and earning gaps. This trend is observed, to a different degree, in all labour market segments and in all countries, including the wealthiest ones.

The ageing populations, declining workforces and looming labour shortages faced by most OECD countries represent important threats to their national economies and social programmes. Fewer workers supporting growing cohorts of elderly people, another emerging trend among OECD and many European countries, increase pressure on economic and social structures that is difficult to sustain. According to a World Bank report (World Bank Group, 2012), Europe can expect a shortfall of 24 million workers by 2040 if the participation rate for women remains constant. If, instead, this rate rises to that of men, the projected shortfall drops to three million.

The far-reaching impacts of these challenges require better and more innovative policies, and strong action to enable full participation in countries' labour force. The

full participation of women in national workforces has become an imperative for all countries in order to achieve and sustain strong economic and social development. Reaching these objectives inevitably involves closing gender gaps in education and employment, and releasing women's full potential. Gender inequalities are now largely perceived by politicians, policy makers, and business leaders as detrimental – not only to women and families, but also to the national and supra-national economies.[1] Increasing female educational attainment and employment will lead to greater workplace diversity, performance and productivity, contributing to providing better services to citizens. The war for talent is declared and forward-looking employers from the private and public sectors are firmly engaged in it. Workforce diversity is important in knowledge-based economies: diversity is associated with creative thinking, innovative solutions and the constant development of new knowledge. International research examining gender-diverse teams suggests that greater gender equality in teams correlates with innovation potential and outcomes of an organisation (Gratton et al., 2007). Other studies suggest that promoting gender equality is often associated with better organisational and financial performance.[2] For example, a recent report revealed that companies with top-quartile representation of women on executive committees perform significantly better than companies with no women at the top, showing 47% more average return on equity and 55% more average earnings before interest and tax (McKinsey and Company, 2013).

Observations that gender equality is beneficial for organisations are valid for all sectors of employment: public and private, for-profit and not-for-profit. However, gender equality in public sector employment is also important for reasons reaching beyond the strict economic and organisational outcomes. Equal representation of men and women in the public sector is an essential factor for gender-balanced policies and for quality service delivery. Gender diversity in decision-making processes is critical for restoring trust in public institutions and citizen-centred public services.

The public sector is often seen as more women- and family-friendly, compared to the private sector (OECD 2012a). The public service is both a policy enabler and implementer and the largest national employer in most countries. The employer's role is largely associated with the obligation to act as a model employer. There is an expectation that the public sector, by the excellence of its modern employment policies and practices, will act as a leading force and as an example for the rest of the country's employers. Therefore, it is crucial that the public sector embeds and exemplifies gender equality in its own employment policies.

The main objective of this chapter is to describe women in public employment. This discussion is often approached from a gender equality and diversity perspective, as most OECD countries have adopted a broader, gender and/or diversity framework, which encompasses issues related to women's employment, among others.

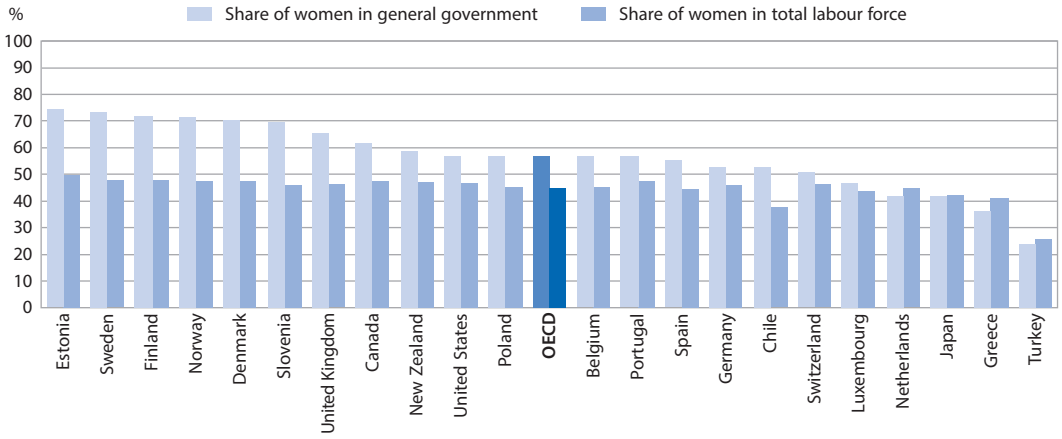
Public sector employment trends

Public sector employment has been particularly attractive for both women and men because of its employment conditions. In many OECD countries, the percentage of female employees in central government is significantly higher compared to the total labour force. Women tend to be particularly attracted by the flexible working hours, diverse career paths and options, relative job stability, and good pay and benefit packages.

Women in general and central government

Women are often over-represented in the public sector across OECD countries (OECD 2012a). Women's share in public sector employment has increased considerably and, in many countries, has outpaced men's participation: between 2001 and 2010, the percentage of women as general government employees increased in each of the 21 countries responding to the OECD survey on gender in public employment.[3] In 2010, women made up more than half of government employees in 16 of the 21 countries (see Figure 3.1). On average, in OECD countries in 2010, women employees accounted for 57% of general government[4] employees and just over 50% of central government[5] employees. This difference is mainly due to the fact that general government employees include teachers and nurses, who most often work at the subnational level of government, and which are female-dominated occupations across all OECD countries.

Figure 3.1. **Women in general government compared to women in the labour force (2010)**



Note: Data for the share of women in general government is from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), *LABORSTA* (database). Data for the share of women in the labour force is from *OECD Labour Force Statistics* (database). Data for Portugal and New Zealand for women in general government was provided by national authorities. Data for Portugal is for 2011 rather than 2010. Data for Japan is for 2009 rather than 2010. Data for Canada, Chile, Finland, Greece, Poland and Switzerland are for 2008 rather than 2010. Data for Norway and Sweden is for 2007 rather than 2010. Data for Turkey is for 2006 rather than 2010. Data for the Netherlands is for 2005 rather than 2010.

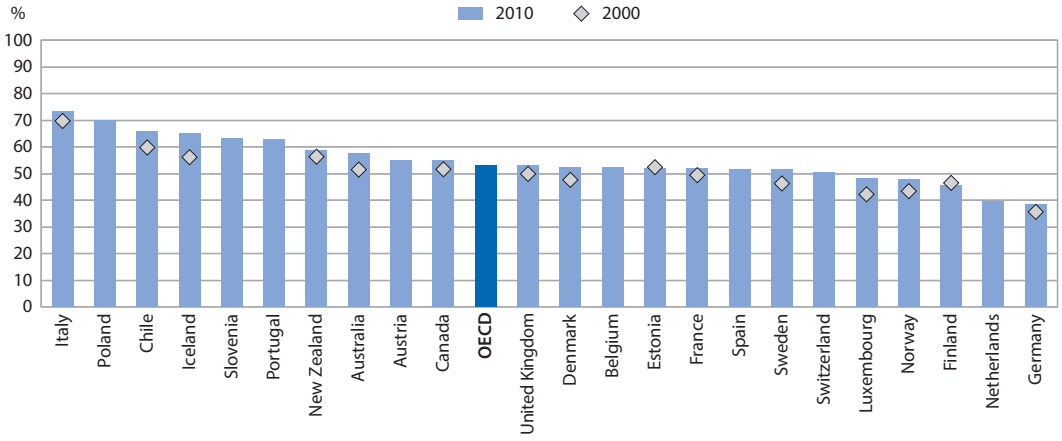
Source: OECD (2013a), *Government at a Glance 2013*, International Labour Organisation (ILO), LABORSTA (database) and OECD Labour Force Statistics (database).

Nevertheless, there is a significant variation between countries. The Nordic countries, Estonia and Slovenia, where the share of women in general government is 20 percentage points higher than their share in total employment (OECD 2012a), display the largest difference. Estonia experienced the largest rise in female employment over the period 2001-2010; women accounted for three-quarters of general government employment in 2010, more than any other OECD member country. On the other hand, in Greece, Japan, the Netherlands and Turkey, women are slightly more represented in the labour force than in general government employment. According to the most recent figures, women represent only 24% and 36% of general government employees in Turkey and Greece, respectively.

In central government, in 2010, women accounted for more than 50% of the full-time central government employees in countries such as Australia, Canada, Chile, Estonia, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Poland and Sweden, but still less than

30% of the full-time public service workforce in Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland[6] (see Figure 3.2). These figures are generally similar to those in 2000. Chile, Iceland and Slovenia continue to employ the largest percentage of women in central government, at more than 60%, while Japan employs the smallest share (16%).

Figure 3.2. **Share of central government jobs filled by women (2000 and 2010)**



Note: Data for Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden is for 2011 rather than 2010. Data for France is for 2009 rather than 2010. Data for the Netherlands is in full-time equivalent. Data for Estonia, Japan and Spain are for full-time employees only.

Source: OECD (2013a), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on data from OECD 2011 *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*.

Box 3.1. **Portrait of women in public sector employment in OECD countries**

- 57% of the general government workforce;
- 50% of the central government workforce;
- Concentrated in fewer occupations than men;
- More than 65% of secretarial positions;
- 27% of top managers;
- 35 % of middle managers;
- 30 % of women are working part-time;
- 80% of part-time employees:
- 54% of the women working part-time are in the professional occupational group and 36% in secretarial positions;
- Less than 1% of top managers and 5% of middle management positions are occupied by women employed part-time;
- The pay gap is less in the public sector than in total employment, which is an average of 16% across OECD countries (OECD 2011c).

Box 2.1. **Portrait of women in public sector employment in OECD countries** *(continued)*

- The key findings of a study, commissioned by OECD and the World Bank and conducted by Anghel, de la Rica and Dolado (2011), suggest that:
  - Women (and men) who work for the public service are two to three years older on average than those working in the private sector;
  - Women who are married and have children are more likely to work in the public sector;
  - There are more workers who are married among both men and women in the public service;
  - On average, women in the public service tend to have more children than those working in the private sector;
  - The public sector attracts more educated women;
  - Occupational segregation is much lower in the public service than in the private sector in most countries, but the differences are smaller in Denmark, Greece, Italy, and Portugal;
  - Public service employment tends to help women get jobs of the same seniority level as men, although gender gaps still remain.

In all countries except Denmark, women working in the public sector have higher wages than women with similar characteristics working in the private sector.

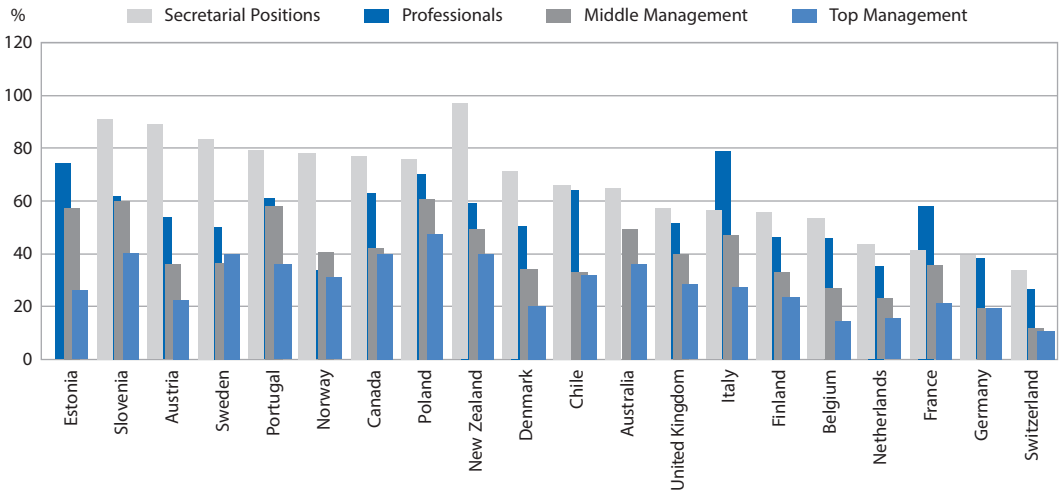
Sources: OECD (2011c), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*; Anghel B., S. de la Rica, and J. Dolado (2011), "The Effect of Public Sector Employment on Women's Labour Market Outcomes," Discussion Paper No. 5825, Institute for the Study of Labour, Bonn.

Women's representation in occupational groups

In all OECD countries, women tend to be concentrated in fewer occupations across the labour force than men. Even among the best achievers in terms of gender equality progress, strong segmentation in educational and occupational choices remains: for example, in Norway in 2009, half of working women were employed in seven occupations, while men were employed in 14 occupations (OECD, 2012a). In Portugal and Spain, 50% of women also work mainly in seven occupations (OECD, 2011b). A recent United States study of the federal workforce revealed that in 2012, women comprised the majority of federal employees working in the fields of personnel management and industrial relations; medical, hospital, dental and public health; legal; social science; and accounting and budget. Yet, women held significantly fewer positions in other areas: 31% of information technology positions, 32% of natural resources management and biological science positions, 28% of physical science positions and 15% of engineering and architecture positions (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2011). Occupational segregation appears to be more pronounced for low-skilled workers and for women with children. Workers with higher education are found in a much larger number of occupations than less educated workers (OECD, 2012a). Female employment is the least concentrated in the United States and the Czech Republic (Ibid). The widest gender gaps in occupational concentration are observed in Sweden, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom, whereas the lowest gaps are observed in Greece and Ireland (Ibid).

Similarly, women in central government across OECD countries are still heavily represented in the secretarial occupational category: they hold about 65% of the secretarial positions. In Austria and Slovenia, for example, women fill approximately 90% of the secretarial positions (see Figure 3.3). This trend is consistent with traditional job segregation, where women occupy lower-grade and lower-paid jobs. Women's higher educational attainment has led to an increase in their representation in the professional sphere in most OECD countries. Yet they still tend to cluster in several occupational categories, due to significant gender differences in the areas of fields of study. It is widely believed that the choices women and men make in fields of study strongly contribute to perpetuate gender segregation in the labour markets, with women underrepresented in the business sector and concentrated in health, welfare, educational and administrative areas of work (OECD, 2012a). However, occupational segregation increases significantly between ages 27 and 35, suggesting that the distribution of females across the occupations is not necessarily and exclusively dictated by pre-labour market choices about education and careers (UCEA, 2011). Part-time work, prevalent in jobs mostly occupied by women, and linked to family obligations and care, may also play a role in horizontal segregation.

Figure 3.3. **Share of central government jobs filled by women, by occupation groups (2010)**



Note: Data for Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden is for 2011 rather than 2010. Data for France are for 2009 rather than 2010. Data for the Netherlands is in full-time equivalent. Data for Switzerland on secretarial positions also include technical positions.

Source: OECD (2013a), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on data from OECD (2011), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*.

While women are generally well represented in OECD countries' public sector workforce, they still lag in parity in management and leadership positions. Despite some important variation between OECD countries (from less than 10% in Switzerland, to 30% in the United States (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2011), to nearly 50% in Poland), women consistently occupy less than half of public service decision-making positions, on average accounting only for 28.6% of senior managers across OECD countries.

Nonetheless, generational shifts, increasing levels of education and changing perspectives as a result of a new socio-economic reality and sustained efforts towards gender equality, are contributing to an increase of the number of women in management positions (mostly in middle management). Thus, on average, in OECD countries, 39.7% of middle managers are women, although there are important cross-country variations, with some countries (Estonia, Slovenia, Portugal and Poland) not only achieving gender parity but also having a majority of women in this occupational category. For example, in Poland, more than 60% of middle managers are women (women's share in top management positions in the public service exceeds 47%[7]). In Canada, the representation of women at the middle management levels (EX minus 1 and EX minus 2[8]) is gradually increasing, with women constituting 38.2% at the EX minus 1 and 47.2% at the EX minus 2 levels in 2011 (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2011). In Australia, where seven out of ten federal and state parliamentarians are men (and this has not changed in the last ten years), the situation in the public service is improving: the proportion of women in senior- and middle-manager roles has grown from 35% in 2002 to 46% in 2012 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, January 2013). The increase of women's representation in middle management is an important factor in closing the gender gap for the top leadership positions, as middle managers constitute the natural pool for senior management candidates in most countries, particularly in view of the ageing trends in the civil service. Similarly, the growing number of women in the professional category – with more than half (54.1%) of professionals being women – is consistent with higher educational attainment and also increases the talent supply for both management categories. Some countries, such as Ireland, create specific initiatives to support talented women in middle management in their progress into senior management positions within the public sector (European Commission, 2012). Those initiatives focus primarily on leadership and management training and development programmes (see Chapter 2 for more discussion).

Policy action to address occupational gender segregation is challenged by the highly complex nature of the problem and the number of involved stakeholders. However, it is important, given its wide-ranging implications, including pay gaps. For example, the occupational segregation in New Zealand is estimated to account for about 30% of the gender pay gap, prompting direct government action (New Zealand Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2011). Initiatives by New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs include investigating and addressing barriers for women within male-dominated industries. The Ministry initiated Women in Trades networks run by tradeswomen for tradeswomen, which aim to build support for women working in trades. Featuring case studies of highly successful women in male-dominated jobs aims to promote further involvement of women in those professions. In many countries, significant efforts have been made to promote girls' and women's educational enrolment in sciences and technology as a way to break occupational segregation. Germany's *Girls' Day* and *New Paths for Boys* initiatives have been successful in influencing the vocational and careers choices of boys and girls.[9] Spain has enacted a specific action plan for equality between women and men in the information society (see Box 3.2).

Women in full-time and part-time work

Since the 1980s, the increase in part-time work in some countries and the expansion of public employment in others have been among the key factors driving the increase in female employment (OECD, 2012a). Like those in the private sector, women in the public sector are more likely to work part-time than men (although male participation in part-time employment has also increased in OECD countries (Ibid). On average, 30% of women employees in the

Box 3.2. **Spain's "Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men in the Information Society"**

In the last few decades, Spain has made spectacular progress in advancing gender equality: between 1998 and 2007, the employment ratio of women has risen from 35.8% to 54.7%, the number of female ministers in the Lower House had risen from 13.3% to 36.3% between 2004 and 2011; 50% of senior ministers in Spain were women (de Luis, 2012). Legislative changes (the Constitutional Act 3/2007 of 22 March for Effective Equality between Women and Men), followed by a concrete action plan (the *Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2008-2011)*, have greatly contributed to those results.

The *Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men in the Information Society* is built on the strategic directions set by the *Strategic Plan of Equal Opportunities 2008-2011* and the framework of the "Plan Avanza" (Spain's Information Society policy, launched in 2006). According to the Plan, all public programmes for Information Society development include the effective consideration of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in their design and implementation. The Government promotes the full incorporation of women in the Information Society through the development of specific programmes, especially in terms of access and training, taking into account initiatives from groups with a high risk of exclusion and from rural areas.

The Action Plan is articulated around seven intervention axes to achieve equality in the Information Society, so that it becomes a vehicle for equality:

- Increasing women's access to the Information Society.
- Improving and increasing the use of Information and Communication Technologies by women.
- Developing content that promotes gender equality in the Information Society.
- Increasing the importance of women in the Information and Communication Technologies sectors.
- Promoting knowledge about gender equality in the Information Society.
- Promoting constant exchange, diffusion and communication of equality values in the Information Society.
- Influencing CIT policies and agents in order to increase gender equality in the Information Society.

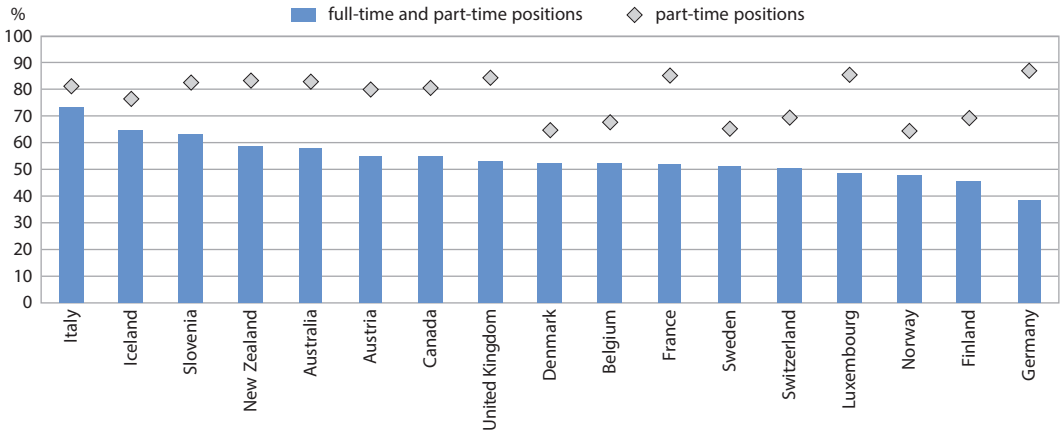
The *Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men in the Information Society* is an important step to address digital gender segregation and occupational gender gaps, and an example of gender equality enhancement in action. The Programme for Gender Equality in the Information Society is a Plan Avanza initiative which provides NGOs with funding to carry out projects aimed at teaching women ICT skills and increasing their employment opportunities.

At the request of the Government of Spain, OECD conducted a peer review of the Plan Avanza, which concluded that considerable progress has been made in closing targeted digital divides (geographical, age, socio-economic and gender) in Spain. The assessment interviews revealed that, among those four targeted areas, closing the gender divide has been the least successful, although more that 60% of the interviewees consider that Plan Avanza had positive impact on the gender divide (among them, nearly 16% define the impact as considerable and nearly 47% as limited). These results demonstrate the complexity of dealing with gender issues and set the stage for the objectives of Plan Avanza 2.

Sources: Government of Spain (2008), *Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men in the Information Society;* De Luis, P. (2012), "Women in Economic Decision-Making in Spain," paper presented to the EU Forum on Exchange of Good Practices on Gender Equality, Norway; OECD (2010f), *Good Governance for Digital Policies: How to Get the Most Out of ICT: The Case of Spain's Plan Avanza*, OECD Publishing.

public sector across OECD countries who responded to the OECD survey work part-time (see Figure 3.4). The average share of part-time employees in total central government employment is 19%; of these, 77.6% are women. This disproportionate share of women as part-time workers in central government is even more pronounced in Germany, Luxembourg and France, where women represent more than 85% of the part-time workforce.

Figure 3.4. **Women's representation in full-time and part-time central government employment (2010)**



Note: Data for Luxembourg, Slovenia and Sweden is for 2011 rather than 2010. Data for France is for 2009 rather than 2010. Data for the Netherlands is in full-time equivalent.

Source: OECD (2013a), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on data from OECD (2011), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*.

More than half (54%) of women working part-time are in the professional occupational group, 36% in secretarial positions and 5% in middle management positions. Less than 1% of women employed part-time are top managers.

There are two types of part-time work: voluntary and non-voluntary. Part-time workers who would prefer to work full-time are termed "non-voluntary" part-timers (OECD, 2010b), although those definitions may lack precision (OECD, 2010b). Voluntary part-time work has been shown to bring higher life satisfaction for women (but not for men[10]).

Part-time work provides an appealing option for employees seeking greater flexibility and work-life balance. It is of particular, but not exclusive, interest to female employees with children. In the United Kingdom, single women without children are 6% more likely than single men without children to hold a part-time job; the likelihood rises to 24% for those married without children and to 50% for those married with small children (World Bank, 2012). Indeed, caring responsibilities, mainly associated with women, could explain to a great extent the disproportionate use of part-time work by women. Care activities constitute one of the main forms of unpaid work, and there are large differences in the time contributed to care work by women and men (OECD, 2012a). In general, women spend at least twice as much time on care work (for children and adults) as a primary activity than men. The largest differences are recorded for Mexico and Turkey, where women spent an average of four hours more on care work than men per week (Ibid). This can lead to greater use of part-time work or other flexible arrangements by women employees. The lack of affordable childcare services contributes to the higher use of part-time, as suggested by the

greater share of part-time work in total female employment in countries with significantly higher childcare costs (Ibid).

Moreover, while the flexibility allowed by part-time employment represents a viable opportunity for the short-term (despite lower compensation and benefits levels), part-time work could have less desirable effects in the longer term, especially with regard to career opportunities, human capital development and, consequently, pension payments, adding to higher rates of old-age poverty among women (Ibid). Access to training, learning and leadership development opportunities is limited for part-time employees across most OECD countries. Indeed, evidence from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland in particular suggests that women who work part-time tend to be less widely represented in management positions. Furthermore, part-time work also contributes to pay and pension gaps and thus has far-reaching consequences, beyond the time of intense child caring activities, which often trigger them. It is also associated with lower quality and more precarious jobs, and is seen as less compatible with executive leadership and management positions, also contributing to persistent differences in career paths between men and women. Longitudinal studies have shown that only a small portion of part-time women employees transition to full-time employment; over the period 1990-95, only 2.7% of German women and 4.1% of British women transitioned from non-employment, through part-time, into full-time employment (O'Reilly and Bothfeld, 2002).

Hence, more concerted government action is needed in introducing polices and transition paths supporting the move from part-time work to full-time, well-paid jobs for women, removing taxation barriers to increase the willingness of women to be employed on a full-time basis, allowing for long-term career prospects for women. These and other policy responses are further discussed later in this chapter.

Women's representation in central government employment and the economic downturn

While more specific data and analysis of the latest economic downturn's impact on women's employment in public services are still to come, some trends observed in OECD countries allow for general assumptions. The economic downturn of 2007-08 and its subsequent effects, especially on employment, have represented an important risk for women's and men's employment and for the gender equality agenda in all sectors of activities, including the public sector. The crisis has affected men and women in different ways, and in most OECD countries the gender employment gap has narrowed, particularly in the early stages of the downturn. With the exception of Israel, Korea, Poland and Sweden, gender employment gaps across OECD countries have shrunk in the three years (2007-09) following the start of the economic downturn (OECD, 2012a). For example, in Ireland, women's employment rate increased from 45% to 61% between 1999 and 2007, while men's employment rate remained relatively stable. However, when the economic downturn hit, men's employment rate fell from 78% to 73% and women's from 61% to 59% over the year 2007-08 alone. As a result, the gender employment gap between men and women narrowed to 14 percentage points in 2008 (Barry and Vasquez del Aquila, 2009). In the EU, the employment gender gap in European countries has declined by 3.2 percentage points: from the 14.1-point pre-recession peak to 10.9 points in the first quarter of 2012 (European Commission, 2013). This narrowing was largely due to important job losses in male-dominated sectors (notably construction and manufacturing) and an increase in the hours worked by women. Women were also less affected because of their different positioning in the labour market, compared to previous crises. Better jobs due to higher educational outcomes and more recent labour market experience allowed for less negative

impact on women's employment. However, later in the crisis, unemployment started to rise among women, too (OECD, 2012a). Women are also affected in an indirect way, as investments in human capital development are reduced and career prospects lowered due to the economic downturn. Increased workload and working hours, and higher work intensity for remaining employees also affect women in a negative way (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2012).

The need to implement fiscal consolidation plans due to the economic slowdown and to restore public finances is also creating pressure on the public sector. In the public sector however, women may have been affected more than men due to their greater representation among public employees. As part of fiscal consolidation programmes, many OECD countries have announced reductions of their public sector workforce, by direct cuts or by non-replacement of retiring public servants; some have already implemented this process or are on their way to doing so. The International Labour Organisation's report *Global Employment Trends for Women 2012* shows the consequences of the austerity measures undertaken by many governments directly affecting public administrations. OECD countries, such as Iceland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, have stopped recruitment or have reduced staff numbers. In the United States, women held 70% of the 765 000 jobs cut in the public sector between 2007 and 2011. The government of the United Kingdom is expected to cut 850 000 public sector jobs by 2017, with grave implications for the sector's female-dominated workforce (ILO, 2012). Measures like pay freezes and cuts to performance pay introduced in some OECD countries (e.g. the United Kingdom and Estonia) adversely affect all employees, yet may have greater impact on women as the majority of government employees. There are also examples of a retreat of equality policies, such as the abolishment of the Equality Ministry in Spain or budget cuts to the equality body in the United Kingdom, along with only partial implementation of the Equality Bill (Rubery, 2012).

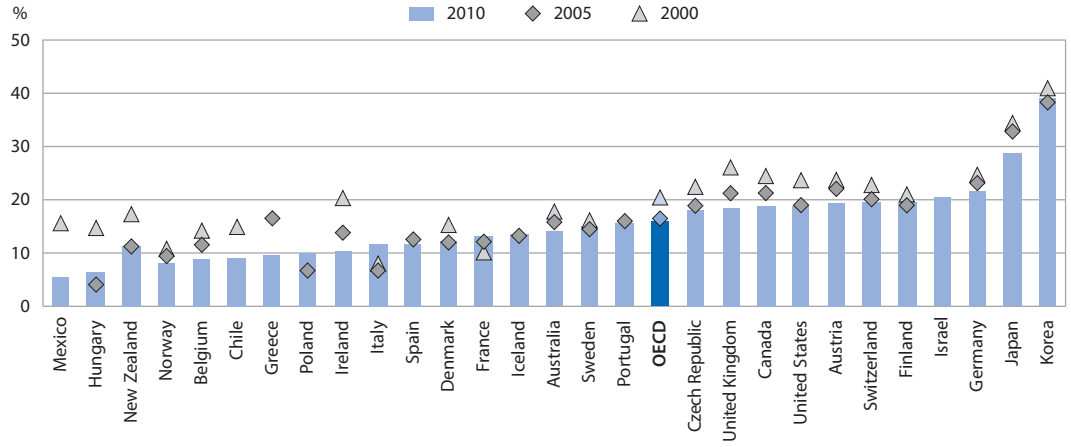
The economic downturn has particularly affected employees with temporary contracts, which made their already-precarious situation worse. In general, women are more likely than men to have a temporary rather than a permanent employment contract. This is particularly true in Finland, Japan and Korea. In contrast, women in Estonia, Hungary, Mexico and the Russian Federation, where a large proportion work in the public sector, are more likely to have a permanent contract than their male counterparts (OECD, 2011g). While working in the public sector could improve women's employment security, the last economic downturn showed that public sector jobs are not immune to workforce reductions and job losses. Unstable economic and employment conditions and cuts to public expenditures may serve as incentives to not only private, but also public sector employers to favour temporary and part-time employment, and to reduce learning and development budgets. Those potential measures would impact all employees and particularly affect women, as they are more inclined to part-time and temporary work arrangements.

A recent study of the time used for caregiving activities, investigating the effects of the financial crisis in the United States, compared federal government and private sector workers. The results show that working mothers in federal service spend about 20 minutes less per day on caregiving activities, compared to their counterparts in the private sector (Mastracci, 2013). However, mothers in federal service spend more time at work compared to their counterparts in the private sector, which prompts questions about the possibly changing working culture in the public service in the post-economic downturn and the real sense of work-life balance under the new conditions (ILO, 2012).

In addition to reductions of public sector budgets, changes resulting in cuts to existing social programmes, such as childcare and elderly care support, would further affect

women's labour force participation and public sector employment. Focus on immediate economic responses and measures, and a shift from social-oriented policy development risk, further weaken women's employment in all sectors of activity and the gender equality agenda. In countries that underwent the most significant fiscal consolidation (e.g. Greece, Spain and Portugal) long-term care allowances and monetary benefits have been reduced; this has had a disproportionate impact on women, according to a recent synthesis report prepared for the European Commission (Bettio et al., 2013). Restructuring of social security (pensions), cuts in public services and public sector wages, as well actual or planned downsizing of public employment, are notable, and the increase in poverty has been more pronounced for selected groups of women, e.g. female pensioners in Greece (Ibid). Further study and understanding of the impact of the latest economic downturn on women and public sector employment is important for proper adjustments and future policy development, to prevent losing gender equality achievements and to ensure sustained efforts in closing the gender gap.

Figure 3.5. **Gender pay gap in earnings for full-time employees (2000, 2005 and 2010)**



Notes:

a. The wage gap is defined as the difference between male and female median wages divided by the male median wages.

b. Estimates of earnings used in the calculations refer to gross earnings of full-time wage and salary workers. However, this definition may vary slightly from one country to another. Further information on the national data sources and earnings concepts used in the calculations can be found at: www.oecd.org/employment/outlook.

c. Data is not adjusted for parity of time worked among full-time employees.

d. For the Czech Republic data for 2000 refers to 1999 (instead of 2000); for Italy and Switzerland data for 2005 refers to 2004 (instead of 2005). Data for New Zealand is provided by the national authorities in 2014.

e. The unadjusted gender wage gap is calculated as the difference between median earnings of men and women relative to median earnings of men.

Source: Based on OECD (2012a), *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

The pay gap

The wage gaps in total employment (measured at 50% of median earnings) have narrowed, but remain significant: 15%, on average, across OECD countries (OECD Gender portal, OECD, 2013c). While research shows the importance of analysing gender pay disparities based on the "adjusted" wage gap, the methodology for calculating the adjusted wage gap is not standardised and hence the information remains scant (see Box 3.3). Estimates of earnings used in the calculations refer to gross earnings of full-time wage and salary workers.

Box 3.3. **Adjusted and unadjusted wage gap**

The *unadjusted Gender Pay Gap* (GPG) represents the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male and female employees, expressed as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male employees. The GPG recorded by Eurostat covers all economic activities except agriculture, fishing and public administration, and businesses with at least ten employees. Gross hourly earnings include paid overtime and exclude non-regular payments (such as bonuses); part-time workers are included. Average earnings used for the GPG are calculated as arithmetic means. This indicator is "unadjusted" because it does not account for individual characteristics that may explain part of the earnings difference, such as differences in education, age or labour-market experience between men and women.

The adjusted gap measures the disparity in hourly wages that would exist if employed women and men were similar in certain key personal characteristics, such as education or age. This gap is of special interest for policy action, since the wage disparity that is measured cannot be justified on grounds of productivity.

Source: European Commission (2013), "The Impact of the Economic Crisis on the Situation of Women and Men and on Gender Equality Policies," Synthesis report.

The public sector in OECD countries exhibits lower horizontal occupational segregation and gender pay gaps (OECD, 2009; and Anghel et al., 2011). Job classification and pay schemes contribute to preventing wide wage gaps in the public sector. In Austria, for example, the estimated gender pay gap at median earnings was 15% in 2011 in the federal civil service (a reduction from 15.8% in 2010), as compared to 21% in the entire labour market (Government of Austria, 2011). In the United Kingdom, the gender gap in the private sector in 2012 was 18.4% (down from 23.7% in 1997), while the gap in the public sector was 9.8% (down from 13.5% in the same period) (Perfect, 2013). In Canada's federal public service, the wage gap between men and women decreased from 17.7% in 1999-2000 to 9.4% in 2011-12 (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2009).

Yet gender pay gaps exist and persist in the public sector in OECD countries, often reflecting the area of work, educational attainment, job tenure and experience, age, length of employment, amount of overtime worked, and the existence of management responsibility. Part-time and contractual work, caring responsibilities and occupational and career choices associated with women can explain the persisting pay gaps to some extent. Wage gaps are also often larger at the higher end of the wage distribution, reflecting the so-called glass ceiling. Other factors, such as discrimination, also play a role in the persistent gender pay gaps. Discrimination, although rarely directly observable or measurable, is often seen as contributing to the remaining at least one-quarter of unexplained gender wage gaps (OECD, 2008). Indeed, the recent US reports highlight that during a leave of absence (e.g. childcare

leave), a woman may lose about 3-9% of wage per year, as compared to those with continuous employment (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2011).

The gender pay gap in the public sector is lower for younger workers. For example, in Canada, for public servants under the age of 35, where women and men with higher education levels are recruited into higher-paying jobs, the gender wage gap was just 2.1% in 2011-12, down from 3.4% in 2009-10 (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2009). The gender pay gap is also the lowest for young employees in almost all EU countries (European Commission, 2013). This may reflect the fact that young women have not yet experienced career interruptions during their working life. In addition, older women may not have been able to benefit from specific equality measures which did not yet exist when they started to work. The higher union coverage in the public sector can also explain the lower pay gap observed in this sector. Countries with higher unionisation rates tend to have lower wage dispersion, while the drop in union coverage in the past two decades has been accompanied by rising wage inequality (OECD, 2012a).

Since pension benefits are often earnings-related, differences in career profiles between men and women often lead to large gender disparities in pension payments (Ibid). As a consequence, senior women face a higher risk of impoverishment. The poverty of women aged over 65 is estimated to be 1.5 times higher than that of men of the same age (Ibid). Closing employment and pay gaps through effective policy measures will contribute to narrowing and eventually closing the pension gap, reducing the likelihood of hardship among aged women.

While pay equality is essential for gender equality, ensuring equal pay for the same work is not sufficient. Ensuring that work of equal value, requiring similar qualifications, is paid on an equal basis (pay equity) is an imperative step for closing the pay gap (see Box 3.4). Indeed, 95% of all respondents to the *2011 OECD Survey on Gender in Public Employment* reported that their countries have introduced legal provisions that seek to guarantee pay equality (equal pay for women and men for the same work) and 85% to guarantee pay equity (equal pay for work of equal value requiring similar qualifications, though not necessarily the same work) (Ibid), although only 40% of the participating countries – such as Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, and Switzerland – conduct regular job assessments to ensure pay equity (see Figure 3.7). Germany and Switzerland also use an equal pay self-test tool, called *Logib*, which allows managers to statistically review their pay policies, identify potential gender wage inequalities, assess enterprise wage gaps, and account for the qualification characteristics of male and female employees (OECD, 2012a). In the United States, the government has launched an open competition – *Equal Pay App Challenge* – to develop new tools to educate the public about the pay gap and promote equal pay for women (White House Council, 2012).

In addition, as an increasing number of OECD countries' public services adopt pay systems based on performance appraisals, greater attention is paid to eliminating gender biases and discrimination, which are often subconscious. For example, linking pay and promotion systems to seniority and experience may inadvertently discriminate against women (and younger workers). As women spend more time at home and take care of the children, these systems tend to favour men, given that men often have more seniority or years of experience. While reliance on seniority as a criterion for pay and promotion is changing in member countries following the recent decision of the European Court of Justice (Court of Justice of the European Union, 2006), it remains a challenge. Moreover, the 2007 report on performance assessment in the public services in the EU member states argued that there were indications that older employees, women, people with disabilities,

public servants in top positions and part-time employees were discriminated against either positively or negatively. The author cites an evaluation report by the UK Cabinet Office ("Equality in Performance Review – Progress Report May 2003"), which noted that part-time workers (i.e. mostly women) are frequently assessed lower, fully employed women (slightly) better than men, and that top civil servants have a better chance of being assessed higher than other employees (Demmke, 2007). In recognition of this challenge, a number of countries are introducing measures to evaluate the results of assessment, require an assessor to avoid discrimination bias in assessments and ensure that performance-based remuneration is based on individual performance and not on prejudices. For example, the German Ministry of the Interior published a code which requires the assessor to avoid discrimination in the assessment process: "Neither gender role expectations nor stereotypical perceptions may affect an evaluation. Teleworkers and part-time employees are to be judged according to the same standards as full-time employees. A shortened working time must not have a negative impact on the performance assessment. Rather, the quality and quantity of work should be evaluated in proportion to the reduced working hours."

Box 3.4. **Gender pay equity: an example of a definition from the Federal Government of Canada**

Pay equity requires that women and men within the same establishment be paid the same for work of equal value. Its goal is to stop the under-valuation of work traditionally performed by women. It is not the same thing as "equal pay", which refers to the simpler concept of "equal pay for equal work". Equal pay only permits similar jobs to be compared within an establishment, and does not address every aspect of gender-based wage discrimination.

Four factors are used to assess the value of work: skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. They also provide criteria for examining whether different jobs are part of the same establishment, set out a scale to determine if jobs are male- or female-dominant; and outline reasonable factors that may justify wage differences. The assessment of wages covers all forms of remuneration, including salary, commissions, vacation pay, severance pay and bonuses. It also includes employer contributions to pension funds or plans, long-term disability plans and all forms of health insurance plans. In addition, reasonable value for housing, payments in kind and any other advantage received directly or indirectly from the employer are included in the definition.

Differences in wages between men and women performing work of equal value within the same establishment are permitted if they are due to one of the "reasonable factors", which may include differences in performance ratings, seniority, demotion, rehabilitation or temporary training assignments, internal labour shortages, regional rates of pay and the re-classification or downgrading of a position.

Sources: Government of Canada Labour Programme (2014), "Introduction to Pay Equity", www.labour.gc.ca/eng/standards_equity/eq/pay/intro.shtml.

Finally, there is some recent evidence of a declining (unadjusted) pay gap in the private sector between 2007 and 2010 in 16 out of 25 member countries. This is largely due to the fact that male employment has been more negatively affected than female in the private sector during the recent economic recession (also given that the majority of women are employed in the public sector). In addition, at least 10% of male workers and 6% of female workers had their hourly earnings reduced in the first three years of the recession (European Commission, 2013). According to Eurostat data, the greatest reductions

(between 3 and 5%) are evident in Lithuania, the Netherlands and Slovenia, moderate reductions in Denmark, Cyprus,[11] [12] Malta, Poland, Sweden, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom, and a less-than-1% decline in Belgium, France, Finland, Luxembourg, Romania and Spain. The EU report shows that three main factors have contributed to the decline in the gender pay gap: cuts in the extra wage components of pay packages, sectoral segregation and, in some countries, equal pay policy. For example, evidence from Belgium shows that the decline in the pay gap of 0.7% between 2007 and 2009 was due primarily to the reduction of disparities in the extra-wage components of pay: while the reduction in the basic wage component of the gap was -0.3%, it was compensated by a larger reduction of the bonus components (-1.9%). In addition, evidence from Belgium, Finland, Norway and the Slovak Republic shows that, given the uneven distribution of male and female workers among different sectors and between the private and public spheres, with men concentrated in the sectors affected by the recession (construction, financial sector and manufacturing), male wages were over-exposed to decline during the recession period. This is also due to the fact that the gender pay gap tends to be wider in the private sector, which was significantly affected by the recession, as compared to the public sector, where the pay gap appears more contained and women are over-represented.

Overall, the pay gap is also expected to decrease as greater numbers of women enter the management ranks, work in traditionally male-dominated groups and receive higher education. This trend may also be supported by more active participation of men in household caring responsibilities due to the introduction of parental and paternity leaves, which enable women to take greater responsibilities at work.

Gender-sensitive human resources management policies in the public sector

The proactive steps undertaken by most OECD governments to ensure equal opportunity for their female and male employees have contributed to narrowing the gender employment gap in general and in central government employment in particular. Women are now generally well represented in public sector employment, but significant gender imbalances persist in management and leadership positions, in part-time and contractual work, in occupational categories and thus in earnings. Some early evidence suggests that the progress made in narrowing gender gaps in the public sector can be associated with proactive measures implemented to ensure gender equality (OECD, 2012a). Therefore, it confirms the importance of the development and implementation of gender-sensitive policies to improve public sector outcomes.

Gender equality policies and measures in the public service

Public service modernisation and strengthening fundamental public service values and principles, such as merit and diversity, may have contributed to the increase of women in public sector employment. Most public administrations embrace values of fairness, representativeness, professionalism, transparency, and accountability in providing services to the citizens of their countries. Exemplifying those values and principles is essential to delivering high-quality policies and services to citizens; achieving equality in gender representation is therefore an essential step to improve citizen-centred services. Fostering diversity could help to strengthen trust in government by portraying it as responsible, responsive and legitimate, and may also contribute to national cohesiveness (OECD, 2009). Diversity raises good governance issues by helping to improve relations between governments and citizens, and strengthening trust in government. It may also contribute to advancing the public service reform agenda (Ibid.). Enhancing diversity (gender and

Box 3.5. **OECD countries' efforts to reduce the persisting gender pay gap in the general labour market and in the public sector**

Most OECD countries have introduced measures to reduce the gender pay gap. These include:

Austria – According to the National Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Labour Market and following amendments to the Equal Treatment Act, since 2011, employers (including the civil service), are required by law to compile reports on the average earnings of women and men. The Ombudsman for Equal Treatment and the Equal Treatment Commission play a key role in the review of complaints. Other measures in different fields of action, including work-life balance, also contribute to reducing the pay gap.

Finland – The Equal Pay Programme – a joint action plan established by the government, central labour market organisations and employers' confederations – seeks to reduce the gender pay gap from 18-20% to 15% and must be fully implemented by 2015. It is based on the principle "equal pay for work of equal value". The Plan is multi-directional and aims to promote gender equality by introducing new analytical pay systems, equality planning and pay surveys, job evaluation and the job performance of employees by supporting women's career development, reducing differences in family leaves, assessing collective agreements and pay systems from gender perspectives and developing the relevant legislation and monitoring mechanisms, etc.

Sweden – The One Million Inspection Project was a massive 2006 inspection campaign on pay surveys, provided by employers to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman. As a result, about 60% of employers introduced pay adjustments or other measures to achieve equal pay for women and men. The pay adjustments concerned at least 5 800 employees, of which about 90% were women. Some employers have taken other measures to achieve equal pay, such as professional development for staff members, training for pay-setting managers and measures to recruit more women in senior positions. In June 2009 the Government presented a strategy with regard to gender equality in the labour market and the business sector. More than 60 measures were presented, including the investment of SEK 235 million from the gender equality appropriation for special initiatives. The strategy contains initiatives to combat gender divisions in the labour market and business sector, promote gender-equal conditions for entrepreneurship, increase gender-equal participation in working life and enhance gender equality in working life conditions.

United States – In May 2013, the President of the United States issued a Memorandum to address "unjust paid disparities" in the federal government, which are "a detriment to women, families, and our economy". The Executive Order insisted on the special responsibility of the nation's largest employer to act as a model employer. The President requested the elaboration of a government-wide Strategy for Advancing Pay Equality to address any gender pay gap. The strategy should include an analysis of whether changes to the General Schedule classification system would assist in addressing any gender pay gap, proposed guidance to agencies to promote greater transparency regarding starting salaries and recommendations for additional administrative or legislative actions or studies that should be undertaken to narrow any gender pay gap. The Paycheck Fairness Act, aiming "to strengthen the Equal Pay Act and give women more tools to challenge unequal wages" has not yet been approved. President Obama proclaimed 26 August 2013 Women's Equality Day.

Sources: Institute for the Equality for Women and Men (2010), "How to Close the Gender Pay Gap? Strategies and Good Practices of States and Social Partners in Europe", Belgium, http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/nl/binaries/45%20-%20Gender%20pay%20gap_tcm336-112122.pdf; Government of Finland, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2012), *Towards Fair Pay. The Equal Pay Program*; Government of Sweden (2009), *Strategy for gender equality in the labour market*; The White House (2013), *Presidential Memorandum. Advancing Pay Equality in the Federal Government and Learning from Successful Practices*; The White House (2013), *Presidential Proclamation – Women's Equality Day, 2013*.

other) calls for improved strategic human resources management frameworks and strategic workforce planning. At the same time, pursing diversity may contribute to improving human resources management systems by updating recruitment, selection, promotion, training and evaluation processes on a regular basis (OECD, 2009).

In addition, OECD countries have introduced a wide range of measures in the public sector to ensure equal access to employment opportunities, address remaining gender gaps and eliminate any form of gender-based discrimination in public employment. These measures target both demand (the employer) and supply (potential and current employees), and may include:

- *Assessment of gender balance in the public sector workforce*. Monitoring gender balance is key to enhance public service workforce diversity and representativeness. It also permits governments to set future targets and to benchmark against their own progress and that of other organisations, both in the public and private sectors. Yet, only half of the countries concerned (Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, Iceland, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands) regularly assess the gender balance of their workforce (see Figure 3.6).
- *Establishing gender equality/diversity targets and quotas.* About half of the responding countries (Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland) have undertaken proactive measures, such as quotas,[13] to increase women's representation in sectors where they are traditionally less represented (see Figure 3.7). These are often complemented by giving preference to equally qualified women candidates, while maintaining merit-based employment processes (Austria, Canada, Germany and Iceland). The Czech Republic gives preferences to women in the selection process and final decisions (OECD, 2012e). One-quarter of the countries, in turn, have established targets specifically for the promotion of women in central government public services, in various positions at the aggregate and sectoral levels. Sweden, Norway and Japan have established specific numerical targets for general hiring, while countries such as France, Germany, Israel, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have fixed promotion targets for women in top positions.
- Norway has quotas for the number of women managers in government at all levels. Norwegian law also requires that women make up at least 40% of the members of all official committees, boards, councils and delegations. The objective of 40% of women in the public service was reached in 2010.[14] Sweden also sets goals for women in managerial positions in the public sector. In Germany, where women are under-represented in public employment, women are entitled to preference in the selection process and are subject to hiring targets of: 12.2% of top management, 14.1% of middle management, 26% of professionals, 23.3% of secretarial positions and 20.5% of technical support (OECD, 2012f). In Ireland, the National Women's Strategy 2007-16 has established some specific targets for women's representation in decision-making positions in civil service (Government of Ireland, 2007). The targets for female Assistant Principal Officers (33%) and Principal Officers (27%) within the civil service were exceeded in 2011, reaching 39% and 31%, respectively.[15] Japan reported establishing targets for women at the sectoral level in areas where women are under-represented. The Gender Equality Plan approved by the Cabinet set a target of 30% female national public employees through the recruitment examination, to be reached by the end of 2015. Each ministry also has to set its own targets for the recruitment and promotion of female public

Figure 3.6. **Gender equality measures in public services in OECD countries**

	Regular assessment of the gender balance of the current central government workforce	Measures to increase women's representation in sectors where they are traditionally less represented (such as quotas)	Establishment of independent complaint and disciplinary committees	Legal provisions to guarantee pay equality (equal pay for equal work)	Legal provisions to guarantee pay equity (equal pay for work of equal value, requiring similar qualifications)	Regular assessments of jobs of equal value to ensure pay equity	Integration of gender/diversity targets into performance agreements for top management	Integration of gender/diversity targets into performance agreements for middle management
Australia	●	○	○	●	●	○	○	○
Austria	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Belgium	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Canada	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	○
Chile	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	○
Denmark	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	○
Estonia	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	○
Finland	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○
France	●	●	○	●	●	○	○	○
Germany	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●
Iceland	●	○	●	●	●	○	○	○
Japan	●	○	○	●	●	●	○	○
Luxembourg	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○
Netherlands	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
New Zealand*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Portugal	●	○	○	●	●	○	○	○
Slovak Republic	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○
Slovenia	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○
Spain	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●
Sweden	●	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
Switzerland	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Total OECD								
● Yes	11	9	8	19	18	8	2	2
○ No	10	12	13	2	3	13	19	19

Note: * Specific agencies may have introduced targets or other gender equality measures.

Source: OECD (2011c), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment.*

employees through the ministerial "Plan to Enlarge the Recruitment and Promotion of Female Employees". A few countries have introduced training programmes for entry procedures and preferential rights for job interviews. For example, in Switzerland, where women represent less than 30% of the public sector's full-time workforce, women have a preferential right to job interviews and are subject to overall representation targets in the public sector (OECD, 2012g). As discussed in Chapter 2, while there is significant debate on the use of targets, they have been effective in closing gender gaps.

- *Accountability for gender diversity.* Establishing clear accountability mechanisms for promoting and respecting gender balance and diversity can draw the necessary attention from management and provide incentives for positive change. A number of OECD countries (Germany and Spain) have already integrated gender or diversity targets into performance agreements for top and middle managers (see Figure 3.7).
- *Laws and policies to ensure gender balance in the public service.* Canada, Germany, Iceland and Japan have put in place policies and laws to ensure balanced representation of men and women in the public service. For example, in Canada, the Public Service Employment Equity Act aims to prevent any discrimination, including gender-based discrimination, and to promote diversity in the federal public service workforce, ensuring its access to the most talented human resources (see Box 3.6). In January 2011, Spain released its *First Plan for Equality between Women and Men in the Central State Administration and Its Public Bodies*, which aims at achieving real and effective equality in public employment and working conditions.
- *Leadership development and mentoring programmes and opportunities.* On the supply side, coaching and leadership development are the most-used measures to enable career progression for both women and men: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have established programmes to that effect (see Figure 3.8). Their objective is to assist employees with the development of career plans and key leadership competencies, and to

Figure 3.7. **Examples of hiring and promotion targets for female public sector employment in some OECD countries**

Country	Target
Hiring Targets	
Sweden	50%
Norway	40% (met in 2009)
Switzerland	44%-48% (overall), 16%-20% (top positions)
Japan	30% (met in 2015)
Promotion targets for Top Positions	
France	40% (of nominations to top positions by 2018)
United Kingdom	39% (of all Senior Civil Service positions by 2013)
Israel	25%
Germany	12.20%

Source: OECD (2011c), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*.

help them succeed in increasingly challenging assignments. Some countries (Austria, Germany and Switzerland) have established gender priority rights in the selection process for equally qualified candidates. For example, the Austrian civil service gives preference to women in the promotion selection process, and there are promotion targets for women and the disabled. Of particular interest is the

Box 3.6. **Canada's Employment Equity Act**

- Enacted in 1986, the aim of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) was to bring positive labour market outcomes for four groups designated as disadvantaged in employment (women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of a visible minority group) and to remove barriers. The initial Act did not apply to the federal public service. In 1995, amendments to the EEA brought the public and private sectors under a comprehensive piece of legislation and maintained a focus on the four designated groups. The Employment Equity Act requires the public service to monitor and, where necessary, enhance the representativeness of its workforce. Workforce availability estimates assist in this process by allowing a comparison between representation of the designated employment equity groups in the public service workforce and workforce availability of these groups in the labour pool from which the public service can recruit. Workforce availability refers to the distribution of people in the designated groups as a percentage of the total Canadian workforce. For federal public service purposes, workforce availability is based on Canadian citizens in those occupations in the Canadian workforce that correspond to occupations in the public service, and is derived from census statistics. Data on persons in designated groups, except women, is obtained through self-identification, provided voluntarily by employees.
- The 2003 Public Service Employment Act (PSEA) provides deputy heads with flexibility to promote employment equity. Deputy heads may identify employment equity objectives as an organisational need in appointment processes. In these cases, equity should be part of the established merit criteria, and linked to the employment equity plan or human resources planning objectives. An appointment is made on the basis of merit when the person meets the essential qualifications of the position. The PSEA allows the establishment of selection areas that are open only to members of one or more designated groups under the EEA. The PSEA 2003 also enables members of an employment equity group to be added to a selection area. This means that geographic, organisational or occupational criteria can be expanded to provide for greater participation of employment equity group members in an appointment process.
- Each year, the President of the Treasury Board is required to submit a report to Parliament on the state of employment equity pursuant to the Employment Equity Act, outlining results and progress in the representation of employment equity designated groups within the core public administration.
- The Employment Equity Act Annual Report 2011-2012 showed continued progress in increasing representation of three of the four designated groups: Aboriginal peoples are up to 4.9%, and persons with disabilities represent 5.7%. Members of a visible minority group increased their representation to 12.1%, almost attaining their workforce availability estimate of 12.4%. While the representation of women decreased marginally from 54.8% to 54.6%, women still surpass their workforce availability of 52.3%.
- Representation of three of the four designated groups within the executive cadre exceeds their workforce availability. The fourth group, Aboriginal peoples, has decreased marginally from 3.8% to 3.7% during fiscal year 2011-12.

Source: Websites of Canada Public Service Commission and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

Austrian Cross Mentoring Programme, designed to increase the number of female applicants for high-level functions. Over the course of the programme, experienced senior managers act as mentors and support female colleagues interested in developing professionally and advancing their careers. The mentors pass on their knowledge and experiences, give advice on career planning and facilitate the mentees' entrance into professional networks.[16] The programme is administered by the Department for Personnel Development and Mobility, which collects applications and matches mentees with mentors. The programme involves regular meetings, and organisation of peer groups and workshops. The success of gender and diversity policies largely depends on their integration into all stages of the human resource management process, from recruitment and training to retention and career development. Human resources management practices should contribute to eliminating discrimination on any basis and securing equal opportunities for all, while ensuring merit-based recruitment and promotion processes (OECD, 2012c). In addition, the United Kingdom has established mentoring and positive action programmes. The majority of offerings are provided on a departmental, not civil service-wide, basis.

Overall, broader measures targeting the causes of inequality are needed to overcome persisting gender gaps in public employment. These measures may include tackling persisting gender stereotypes, involving men in sharing unpaid work responsibilities and making greater use of flexible work arrangements (e.g. parental leave, part-time employment), establishing effective accountability mechanisms for promoting gender equality at all levels of public service and supporting women in developing the necessary skills and capacities to access executive leadership.

Closing the gender gap in top- and middle-management positions, and in some occupational groups, may require policies influencing the choice of fields of studies and combatting gender stereotyping in education. Gender is a significant determinant of the choice of field of study, even when ability, the perceived quality of the programme, and family background are controlled for (OECD, 2012a).

Some schools of public administration are taking steps to ensure gender balance. For example, the National School of Administration in France (ENA) admitted 45% women students in 2013 (as compared to 28.75% in 2012). It introduced a more structured approach to the admission process and included a human resources expert on the selection committee to ensure that the admission criteria were focused solely on the competencies of the candidates rather than the impression they make. To achieve greater progress in ensuring diversity and equal access to education for both men and women, the ENA announced plans to undertake further reforms of the admission process to allow greater focus on candidates' competencies and skills.

Institutional frameworks for promoting gender balance in the public sector

Well-designed institutional frameworks and accountability mechanisms which establish clear roles and responsibilities for promoting gender equality in the public service are key for ensuring coherent approaches to gender issues. Less than one-third of the 22 countries that responded to the OECD 2011 Survey on Gender in Public Employment (Estonia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Portugal) report the existence of a single unit responsible for embedding gender concerns in human resources management policies for public servants in central government. Australia, Finland, Germany, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia indicate that they do not have a dedicated unit responsible

Figure 3.8. **Central government laws or policies that explicitly seek to enhance the recruitment/promotion (and career advancement) of women in the civil service (2012)**

	Preferential right for job interviews	Preference in the selection process (extra points)	Special training programmes for taking entry examinations	Organisational rewards to units that increase share/meet targets	Rewards to managers who increase share/ meet targets	Other laws/ policies	Equality targets	Preferential right for being promoted	Preference in the promotion selection process	Information sessions specially directed	Coaching
Australia	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Austria	○	●	○	○	○	○		○	●	○	●
Belgium	○	○	●	○	○	○		○	○	○	●
Canada	●	●	○	○	○	●		○	○	○	○
Chile	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Denmark	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Estonia	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Finland	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
France	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
Germany	●	●	○	○	○	●		●	●	○	●
Iceland	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
Japan	○	○	●	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	●
Luxembourg	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Netherlands	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
New Zealand*	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Portugal	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Slovak Republic	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Slovenia	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Spain	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○
Sweden	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	●
Switzerland	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	●
United Kingdom	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	●	●
Total OECD											
● Yes, in place	2	4	3	0	0	4	5	1	3	3	7
○ No, not in place	20	18	19	22	22	18	-	21	19	19	15

*In New Zealand, specific agencies may have introduced targets or other gender equality measures.

Source: OECD (2011c), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment.*

for gender concerns in public service human resources management. In three countries, the responsibility is located in the prime minister's office, while in ten other countries - in the central government ministry responsible for human resources management. The concentration and the location of the responsibility for embedding gender equality in HRM policies may impact the overall action and results of gender equality efforts in different ways. While the location in the prime minister's office may be seen as (and often is) an important factor for centralising and streamlining policy development and implementation efforts, the opposite effect (of isolation and formalisation) cannot be excluded.

The majority of participating countries have allocated the responsibility for promoting and implementing gender equality and equity policies to different institutions within the public service as part of their human resources management strategies (see Table 3.1). Decentralising

Box 3.7. New Zealand's initiative to address the leadership pipeline by attracting and retaining talented women

The New Zealand government sees proactive talent management that identifies high-potential and high-performing women, and supports them in their leadership careers, as essential to ensuring that talented women enter and stay in the leadership pipeline. Gender balance in leadership is also viewed as a business imperative on the strategic agenda, and top-level support as critical to driving the changes required to create an organisational culture that values leadership diversity.

The Minister of Women's Affairs released a report "Realising the Opportunity: Addressing New Zealand's Leadership Pipeline", which examines three factors - unconscious bias, career breaks and flexible working – their role in creating barriers to women's career progression and their contribution to the loss of leadership talent.

Following discussions with an external Advisory Panel and other industry representatives, the Ministry decided on the three areas of focus:

- unconscious bias and its influence on women's recruitment and career progression;
- processes for women leaving and re-entering the workplace following career breaks;
- flexible working arrangements that would better meet individual and business needs.

The Ministry identified a number of actions organisations can take to reduce these barriers and gain the benefit of attracting and retaining talented women leaders, including:

- raising awareness and developing actions to address the unconscious bias that will otherwise continue to create invisible barriers to women's progress in the leadership pipeline;
- supporting talented women to return to work or re-enter the workforce in jobs that fully utilise their leadership skills and maximse value to the organisation;
- aligning policies, workplace practices and organisational culture to support effective flexible working arrangements for all employees;
- proactively planning and managing women's leadership careers in a way that supports their career and life choices; and
- taking an executive-led and strategic approach to implementing transformational change that will shift existing mindsets and behaviours to support gender balance in leadership.

Source: New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs (2013), *Realising the opportunity: Addressing New Zealand's leadership pipeline by attracting and retaining talented women.*

gender balance policy development and implementation, as well as splitting responsibilities, may be perceived as a message about the potentially low importance of the issue. It is important to have a balanced approach to centralisation, especially when it comes to policy implementation. Ensuring common gender equality objectives in public sector human resources management policies while recognising the complexity of the issue and the many factors (including cultural, regional, etc.) that play a role in its evolution is of significant importance for the success of these efforts.

Most importantly, clear accountability for the outcomes of the gender equality efforts should be established and well known by all actors. In addition, robust oversight mechanisms can support countries in ensuring the sound implementation of gender equality and equity regulations across the public sector (see Box 3.8). Yet, the OECD

Table 3.1. **Unit responsible for embedding gender concerns in human resources management policies for civil servants employed in central government: presence and location (2012)**

	Single unit responsible for gender concerns in public service HRM	Location of the unit
Australia	○	
Austria	♦	a/e
Belgium	♦	B
Canada	♦	b/e
Chile	♦	b/c
Denmark	♦	b/c
Estonia	●	C
Finland	○	
France	●	B
Germany	○	
Iceland	♦	a/d/e
Japan	♦	b/e
Luxembourg	♦	b/c
Netherlands	●	D
New Zealand	●	B
Portugal	●	C
Slovak Republic	○	
Slovenia	○	
Spain	♦	d/e
Sweden	♦	E
Switzerland	♦	b/e
United Kingdom	♦	c/e

Legend: ● Yes, there is such a unit
○ No, there is no such unit/division/institution
♦ No, this responsibility is shared by more than one unit/division/institution
A Office of the Prime Minister/President
B A central government ministry responsible for human resources management of the central government civil service
C A ministry responsible for promoting gender equality and mainstreaming
D A ministry responsible for social affairs
E Other

Source: OECD (2011c), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*.

survey reveals that one of the main challenges for effective implementation of gender equality initiatives is limited accountability mechanisms to hold government ministries to account for complying with gender equality regulations. Inability to establish effective accountability may undermine legal requirements for anti-discrimination and pay equity and equality measures. It may also dissuade women and men from seeking recourse in case of unfair treatment. Using performance management systems to establish clear accountabilities at all levels of public organisations can help overcome this barrier. Currently, only two countries participating in the *OECD 2011 Survey on Gender in Public Employment* reported integrating targets for gender equality in performance agreements of senior and middle managers.

Box 3.8. **The Canadian Public Service Commission and Employment Equity Act**

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is an independent agency reporting to Parliament with a mandate to safeguard the integrity of the appointment system. The PSC is accountable for employment equity in all appointment activities it administers or oversees under the *Public Service Employment Act*. In addition, the *Employment Equity Act* (EEA), which aims to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability, requires the PSC to identify and eliminate barriers and institute positive policies and practices in the public service appointment system to achieve a representative workforce. The Public Service Commission of Canada (along with The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat) also monitors the implementation of employment equity in departments and agencies, including following up on the audit reports of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The Employment Equity Policy specifies that it is the responsibility of departments and agencies to:

- provide a supportive work environment that will encourage employees to self-identify as designated group members (women, aboriginals, people with disabilities and visible minorities) and attract them to work in the public service;
- conduct an accurate workforce analysis by measuring internal representation, distribution, participation and available internal labour pools for all occupational categories; and comparing internal workforce data to appropriate (including regional) external availability data;
- conduct an effective review of employment systems, internal policies and practices, as well as the implementation of central agency policies to determine barriers to the employment of designated groups;
- consult and collaborate with employee representatives;
- communicate with employees by regularly distributing information about employment equity initiatives and progress to all employees;
- use all available internal media and ensure that media are accessible to employees with disabilities;
- hold management at all levels accountable for the implementation of employment equity by integrating employment equity objectives into managers' accountability statements and performance assessments; and
- co-operate with the Canadian Human Rights Commission with respect to its audits pursuant to the Employment Equity Act and maintain the department in a state of audit-readiness.

Source : Official Websites of Public Service Commission and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

Box 3.9. **Systemic data and research approaches to women and gender issues in public services**

The persisting difficulties in closing the gender employment gap demonstrate the great complexity of gender-related issues. The multi-dimensional inter-connectedness of these issues represents a significant challenge for policy analysis and policy development. Understanding gender issues' deep root causes and their inter-relations is at the basis of any sound policy advance. Evidence-based analysis and policies require sound data and analysis approaches. Gender-disaggregated data and gender statistics are essential to that effect. As women and men do not form homogeneous groups, disaggregated data will allow for deeper analyses and the identification of more appropriate policy solutions.

Enriching available national and cross-national gender-related data and information will ensure a better description and understanding of women's employment issues. Collecting demographic data beyond the basic demographic characteristics and information about employees' perceptions, motivations and satisfaction will allow for multi-disciplinary analysis, better understanding of gender trends in governments and better policies. A consolidated gender knowledge base is an invaluable research and policy development tool for OECD countries and the policy and academic communities. Further advances impose a more systemic approach to data collection and analysis, including longitudinal and comparative analyses with other sectors of employment, about women employees in public sector in OECD countries. They will allow better understanding of gender gap issues, and develop knowledge and more effective policy solutions to close the persistent gaps.

Recent OECD and academic studies provide conclusive evidence of the importance of solid data and further analysis of women's issues in public employment. By incorporating questions about gender issues, public service employee surveys and other public employment surveys can provide valuable information about women's motivation, needs, and satisfaction with employment conditions and career progression. For example, **Mexico**'s Ministry of Public Service conducts an annual survey "Organizational Climate and Culture", which in 2013 covered 279 institutions (with over 600 thousand responses). The survey includes two gender-related components, among others, which focus on "gender equity" and "work and family balance" and enables Mexican policy-makers to better understand gender dynamics in public workplaces.

Source: Information provided by the Government of Mexico.

Policies to promote work-life balance in the public sector

Women's employment outcomes are inherently linked to existing societal views about women's roles as mothers and spouses, and responsibilities for caring for elderly family members and housework. The policy responses to reconcile women's traditional roles and labour market participation in most OECD and non-OECD countries have been oriented towards ensuring more flexibility for women and men to better reconcile those roles. Effective work-life balance policies, and, hence, the ability of both men and women to manage their family and professional responsibilities, have been associated with positive outcomes in the following areas: organisational (commitment, lower intent to turnover, lower absenteeism, job satisfaction, reduced job stress, higher rating of the organisation as a place to work); family (family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction, family adaptation, family integration, positive parenting); employee (reduced perceived stress, reduced depressed mood, perceived physical health, reduced burnout, life satisfaction); and societal (reduced use of the health care system (Duxbury and Higgis, 2003) (see Box 3.10).

Box 3.10. **Highlights from Canadian studies on balancing work and life**

Canadian research found that women are more likely than men to report high levels of work-life conflict related to multiple roles they perform at a given time (role overload) and high caregiver strain – including emotional (e.g. depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion), physical, financial and family strain. Women are found to devote more hours per week than men to non-work activities such as childcare and elder care, and are more likely to have primary responsibility for non-work tasks. Such a high work-life conflict is associated with increased absenteeism and substandard organisational performance. In other words, high work-life conflict negatively affects an organisation's bottom line, both in the public and private sectors, while employees with role overload are more likely to have physical and mental health problems. These employees are also less committed to their organisations, report higher job stress, are less satisfied with their jobs (due largely to dissatisfaction with workloads, hours worked and work schedules), are more likely to be absent from work (due largely to physical and mental health problems), are more likely to be thinking of leaving the organisation (to escape frustrating and non-supportive work environments and to get more time for themselves and more recognition for their efforts) and have a less favourable view of their employer.

Work-life conflict has important costs for organisations in both the public and private sectors. The study shows that the direct costs of absenteeism due to high work-life conflict are approximately USD 3 to 5 billion per year (both direct and indirect costs are approximately USD 4.5 to 10 billion per year). The study found that employers could substantially decrease absenteeism in their organisations if they reduced work-life conflict by 24.2% by eliminating high levels of role overload and by 8.6% by eliminating high levels of caregiver strain.

Source: Duxbury, L. and C. Higgis (2003), *Work-Life Conflict in Canada in the New Millennium. A Status Report*, available at publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/H72-21-186-2003E.pdf.

The public sector is known for its flexible working conditions and is considered to offer greater opportunities for work-life balance. Indeed, most countries responding to the *OECD Survey on Gender in Public Employment* (OECD, 2011c) have introduced measures to improve work-life balance in the public sector (see Figure 3.9). Those measures include flexible working hours, part-time work and maternity, paternal and parental leave arrangements that include time off to care for a sick or elderly family member. All countries provide part-time employment solutions and family-related sick leave. Most countries have taken steps to accommodate the special needs of pregnant or breastfeeding women; over 70% provide teleworking solutions and the possibility of working compressed weeks (OECD, 2011c), and half facilitate childcare solutions for public sector employees. The United States implemented the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 to provide federal agencies with a tool to enhance work-life balance, among other objectives. This Act applies to all federal executive agencies and provides them with a framework to better leverage technology and to maximise the use of teleworking arrangements. The Act aims to help agencies recruit new federal workers and retain valuable talent; improve the ability of the federal government to maintain continuity of operations during national security incidents, natural disasters, or other emergencies; and enhance the ability of federal employees to manage their work and family obligations.[17]

Work-life balance initiatives contribute to higher women's employment rates, the creation of a diverse public sector workforce and the improvement of public perceptions about the sector's employment – and, thus, have a positive effect on recruitment and retention efforts. They also contribute to increasing employees' and the sector's productivity and to improving

Figure 3.9. **Work-life balance measures in public employment in OECD countries (2012)**

Work-Life Balance Measures	% of Countries
Leave to take care of a sick family member	100%
Flexible start and working hours and time saving	100%
Part-time employment solution	100%
Specific measures to accommodate the needs of pregnant women	86%
Specific measures to accommodate the needs of breastfeeding women	86%
Teleworking	76%
Condensed/compressed work week	71%
Subsidies for childcare	70%
Leave to take care of elderly family member	62%
Employer provided childcare facilities	48%

Source: OECD (2011c), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*.

the quality of services provided to the public. Yet, along with those benefits for employees and the public service in general, these flexible working arrangements and programmes also present a number of challenges. There is a highly gendered participation in such arrangements, with women being the primary users of flexible working programmes. In addition to the gender impact (and possibly in relation with it), flexible working arrangements are more popular among low-income groups. Low-paid, predominantly female workers in clerical and lower administrative jobs in the public sector are most likely to engage in job sharing, part-time, reduced hours or term-time work (Barry and Vasquez del Aguila, 2009). Work-life balance measures are limited or very rarely used at the top level of organisations. The persisting perception of flexible working arrangements users as less committed to their own career development and to the organisation can be detrimental to employees' career aspirations and thus have a negative impact on women's career progression. All those persisting challenges call for a revision of current models and organisational culture change, including the promotion of the use of flexible work policies by men and senior managers.

Achieving work-life balance for women also involves more flexibility measures targeted at men employees. Providing flexibility options to men and women, mothers and fathers, allows for better and more specific family decisions. In fact, recent research by the Diversity Council of Australia shows that about 18% of men, including 37% of young fathers, have "seriously considered" leaving an organisation due to a lack of flexibility (Russell and O'Leary, 2012; Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2013).

Part-time employment and work-life balance

Part-time employment is one of the key measures to ensure work-life balance, and an important feature of attractive organisations. The absence of work-life balance mechanisms was found to be one of the factors that discourage women from applying to leadership positions. Many employers in the public and private sectors offer part-time employment to meet their recruitment and retention objectives and to create competitive working conditions. Yet, while employees in the public and private sectors value part-time work options, the vast majority of employees working part-time in both sectors are women.

While offering flexibility and better work-life balance, part-time work is not a panacea for all women employees, nor is it a miracle solution for closing gender gaps. The disproportionate use of part-time work options by women (on average, women account for up to 80% of part-time workers in OECD public sectors) can reinforce traditional employment patterns and the gender division of labour and, thus, counteract gender equality efforts. Greater use of part-time work by women also appears to contribute to women's generally lower earnings and existing pay gaps. The latest economic downturn has shown the importance of part-time work to overcome the negative effects of the crisis on many families but it has also contributed to reinforce the part-time pattern among women, with potentially longer-term consequences for gender equality.

To overcome the negative effect of part-time work, since the 1990s, most OECD countries have introduced legislation to encourage high-quality, part-time work opportunities and to reduce non-voluntary part-time employment. Establishing and promoting employment paths to ease the transition from part-time to full-time work is imperative for all countries, and especially those dealing with an aging workforce and labour shortages. With its booming economy, Norway already faces labour force shortages and seeks to encourage transitions into full-time work. A study exploring Norwegian women's transitions between part-time and full-time work (Kitterød et. al, 2013) found that educational attainment promotes transitions to full-time work and deters shifts to part-time work, while health restrictions have the opposite effect. The occupational sector also plays a role in working time transitions: working in the health and service sector restricts transitions to full-time work (ibid.). Some countries' experiences with part-time to full-time or full-time to part-time transitions seem to indicate that these are easier in the public sector compared to the private sector due to problems of enforceability (Karamessini, 2010). There are also differences among countries and continents: in general, both men and women stay longer in part-time positions in Europe than in the United States and are significantly less likely to move from part-time to full-time jobs (Buddelmeyer et. al, 2005). However, important differences exist among EU countries and, in the case of women, may reflect cultural factors as well as national differences in labour market institutions (ibid.).

Many countries have also eased restrictions on work for recipients of unemployment, disability or social assistance benefits by allowing them to earn more from part-time work before their benefits are reduced or cut altogether (OECD, 2010b). Most OECD countries (with the exception of Greece, Slovenia, Spain and Portugal) provide job search services to non-voluntary part-time workers willing to work more or full-time. However, non-voluntary part-timers often receive less assistance than the fully unemployed (OECD, 2010b). In a few countries, non-voluntary part-time workers can only obtain job assistance if they are also receiving unemployment benefits or assistance (e.g. Sweden and Switzerland), or if their income falls under a specified threshold (e.g. Czech Republic and Slovak Republic) (ibid.). Other measures to assist transitions from part-time to full-time work include: intensive interviews and individual action plans (e.g. Australia, Denmark, Germany and Japan), training programmes (e.g. Estonia, Korea, New Zealand and Norway), subsidised employment in the private (e.g. Australia, Korea and Sweden) and public (e.g. Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Portugal) sectors. However, participation in subsidised jobs, particularly in the public sector, is most often not open to under-employed workers (ibid.).

Well-designed part-time policies help to reconcile work and life events and set the stage for gender equality in public and other employment. New approaches are needed with global (not women-centred) focus to overcome the long-lasting disadvantages of part-time work patterns for women. Ensuring equal treatment for part-time workers and

incorporating part-time or other flexibility options in career patterns (especially oriented towards caring and other time-limited activities) will offset the existing negative effects of part-time employment on career progression. Furthermore, implementing performance-based instead of tenure-based pay would be a step towards overcoming pay inequalities, and thus contribute to closing pay and pension gaps. Establishing and promoting employment paths to ease the move from part-time to full-time work is imperative for all countries, and especially those dealing with an aging workforce and labour shortages.

Childcare-related policies and practices

Most OECD countries offer a variety of leave provisions to account for different life events and to allow for better work-life balance in their workforce: sick leave, plus maternity, paternity and parental leave, and leave to take care of sick or elderly family members are available for public sector employees. They also provide different measures to ensure more flexibility for employees, such as flexible start and working hours, teleworking and compressed workweeks. Employment-protected child- and elderly-related leave and flexible workplaces aim to enhance employees' and organisations' productivity and thus ensure better outcomes for the public service and the public.

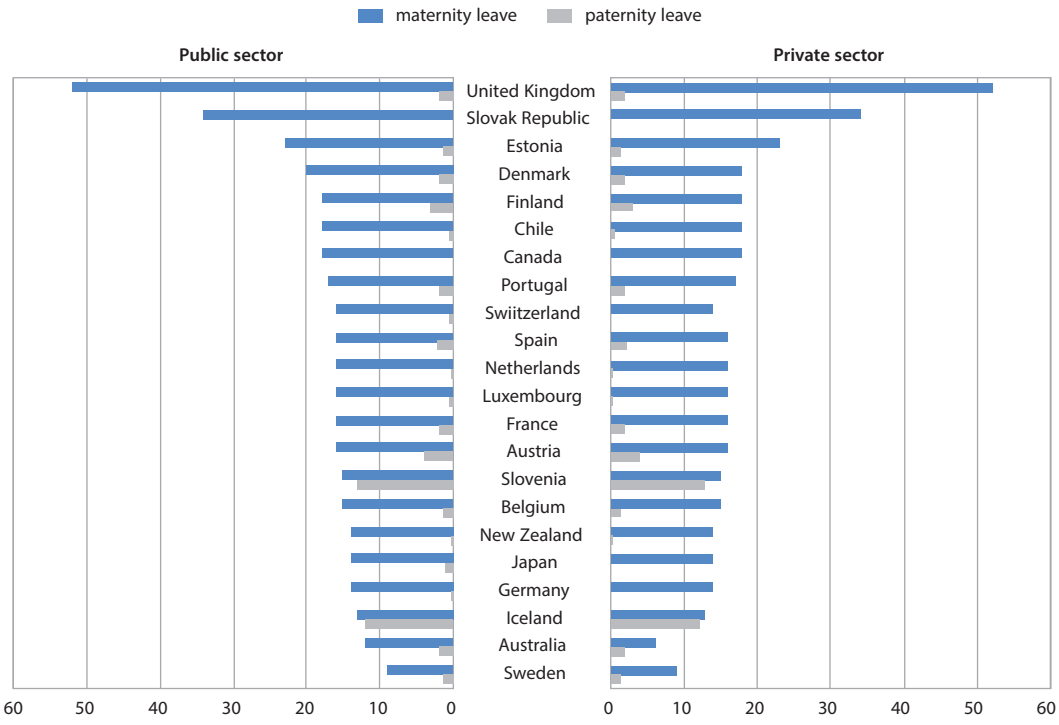
The gender differences in the use of these benefits primarily result from differences in caring responsibilities, which are most frequently associated with women. This widely known fact has been confirmed by recent studies. United States survey data shows that if men mainly leave the workforce to reposition themselves for a career change, the majority of women do so for family and care responsibilities (Hewlett and Luce, 2005). According to the same survey, 44% of working women vs. 12% of working men take leave for family reasons. To this end, all OECD countries responding to the survey provide some sort of childcare leave that could fall into one of these three categories: maternity leave (for mothers' exclusive use), paternity leave (for fathers' exclusive use), and parental leave (for shared use by both parents). However, there are significant cross-country differences with regards to the length of leave, the percentage of leave that is paid, and who pays for it. In many countries the public sector offers paid leave complemented with unpaid leave. Most countries provide allowances during maternity leave and fewer for paternity leave, in both the public and private sectors.

In most countries responding to the *OECD 2011 Survey on Gender in Public Employment*, there are no significant differences between the public and the private sector in the length of paid maternity and paternity leaves (see Figure 3.10). Only Denmark, Switzerland and Australia provide longer paid maternity leave for public employees compared to workers in the private sector. The public service tends to provide top-ups for both leaves, although there is a wide cross-country variation. The average rate of wage replacement during maternity leave in the public sector is 92%, vs. 85% in the private sector. The average rate of wage replacement during paternity leave in the public sector is 79% vs. 63% in the private sector. A Statistics Canada study (Marshall, 2010) also found that working in the public (vs. the private) sector or in a large company significantly increases the chances of receiving a top-up. Although unionised employees generally have higher top-ups, the study concludes that unionisation is not a key factor in receiving a top-up (Ibid).

Parental leave

Almost all of the countries responding to the *2011 OECD Survey on Public Employment* provide parental leave options in both the public and private sectors. Interestingly, there is almost no difference between the length of parental leave provided in the public and

Figure 3.10. **Maternity and paternity leave length in OECD countries, weeks (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011c), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*; OECD (2011i), *Family database*.

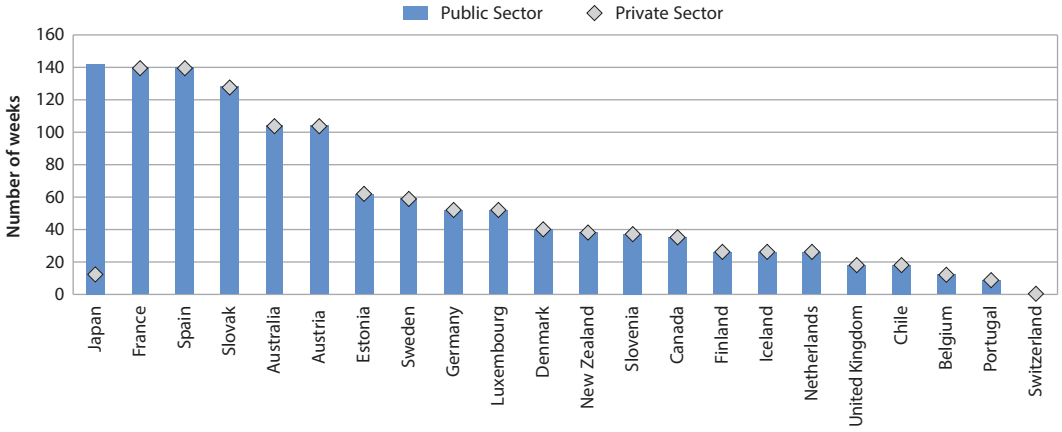
private sectors (except for Japan) across OECD countries, although some variations exist in terms of the level of remuneration and allowances during parental leaves between the sectors (e.g. Japan, Canada and Austria). Often, the level of allowances for parental leaves depends on specific collective bargaining agreements, including variations within the same public sector, which makes cross-country comparisons in this area difficult. There are also significant differences in the time allowed for parental care among OECD countries

Policy developments in OECD countries in recent years have been oriented towards extending parental leave entitlements to fathers. Encouraging fathers to take a more active role in child care has been supported by research findings[18] demonstrating the linkages between the time spent by fathers in early child care and their later involvement with child care.

Policy measures have been implemented in several countries to increase the uptake among fathers (see Box 3.11). In Japan, where fathers' uptake of childcare leave is very low, the National Personnel Authority recently conducted a major revision of the leave system in the public service in order to promote childcare leave acquisition among male employees and to achieve the national target of 13% by 2020. The uptake of childcare leave by fathers leave gradually increased between 1999 and 2009, from 0.2% to 1.6%, and made an important leap in 2010 to 3.4% following these policy measures (Government of Japan, 2012). In some countries, fathers are granted the exclusive right to parts of the parental-leave entitlement and/or associated income support; about one-half of OECD countries grant separate paternity leave entitlements (OECD, 2012a), mainly by creating individual, non-transferable rights for periods of leave for specific use by fathers (OECD, 2011g). Belgium, Iceland, Luxemburg, Norway and Sweden are among the countries that

have introduced this type of programme. Countries with the highest paternal participation rates include those with non-transferable leave programmes that also offer high wage-replacement rates, mainly Nordic countries: Sweden (90% participation rate), Norway (89%) and Iceland (84%) (Marshall, 2008).

Figure 3.11. **Length of parental leave in OECD countries: paid and unpaid in public and private sectors (2012)**



Note: the length of parental leave is calculated as the difference between the total leave (full childcare leave) allowance and maternity leave. Data for the United Kingdom comes from the Government of the United Kingdom, *www.gov.uk/parental-leave/entitlement*; data for Portugal comes from the OECD (2011), *Family database*.

Source: OECD (2011c), *Survey on Gender in Public Employment*.

Iceland has the proportionally most gender-equal paid parental leave arrangement because one-third of the parental-leave period is reserved for men (13 weeks). The proportion is 20% in Norway (equivalent to ten weeks) and 13% in Sweden (8.5 weeks). When Iceland introduced parental leave, it led to an increase in the proportion of parental leave days taken by fathers from 3% in 2001 to some 35% (Eydal and Gislason, 2008). In Norway, fathers use around 13% of their leave entitlement, while the share used by their Swedish counterparts reached 22% in 2009 (Moss, 2010). Other countries have opted for bonus parental leave if fathers take up a minimum amount. In 2007, Germany reformed parental leave by granting parents two extra months if the father took at least two months of parental leave. Similarly, Portugal awards an extra month of parental leave if the father takes up a month of his entitlement. In France and Austria, similar reforms have been introduced. As a result, Germany saw the number of children whose fathers took parental leave rise from less than 9% in 2007 to 25% in the second half of 2010 (Federal Statistical Office, 2012). In Portugal, the proportion of fathers taking parental leave increased from less than 10% in 2009 to 23% in 2010 (OECD, 2012a).

Creating specific paternity leave options promotes gender equality by, among other things, breaking down gender stereotypes. Increased paternity leave uptake can have direct and indirect impacts on gender equality in public and private sector employment. It could help overcome employers' hesitancy to hire and promote young female employees because of potential family obligations and parental leave arrangements. However, other factors, such as employers' prejudices on a father's commitment to work if he takes leave, can impact fathers' decisions to use available paternal leave. Further understanding those factors and the cultural barriers to fathers' childcare leave uptake could provide for more targeted policy solutions.

However, when the leave is not specifically targeted for fathers, it tends to be used, mostly or exclusively by mothers, reinforcing traditional gender patterns. Differences in the uptake of parental leave between men and women could also increase the perceived cost of employing women and therefore diminish their employment opportunities (World Bank, 2012). In addition to traditional beliefs about mothers'/fathers' roles, men most often earn more than their spouses, and the impact on family income factors in decisions about who should be the care provider. The availability and affordability of formal and informal childcare is another important factor in family decisions about the uptake and the duration of parental leave. Under-supplied availability, high cost, location and questionable quality of childcare facilities often incite parents (most often mothers) to opt out of work for different periods of time (OECD, 2012a).

Daycare and aftercare facilities

The availability and affordability of childcare and elderly care facilities are important factors in families' decisions about women's and men's labour participation as well as career choices and progression. Good quality childcare facilities encourage both parents' active continuous participation in the workforce and provide viable solutions, especially for those

Box 3.11. **Sweden's encouragement of dual parent workforce participation and parental leave use**

In 1974, Sweden became the first country in the world to replace maternity leave with parental leave. The main objectives behind the parental insurance system in Sweden are the well-being of the child, women's economic independence and the involvement of fathers in family and home life. In 1974, fathers accessed only 3% of parental leave and they took less than 1% of the total days available. By 1992, 48.3% of fathers took an average of 63 days leave. By 2008, men were using an all-time high of 22% of parental leave.

In Sweden, parents are entitled to 480 days of parental leave when a child is born or adopted. This leave can be taken by the month, week, day or even by the hour. Women still take most of the days – in 2012, men took about 24% of parental leave. 60 days of leave are allocated specifically to each parent and cannot be transferred to the other. In addition, one of the parents of the newborn baby gets ten extra days of leave in connection with the birth or 20 days in case of twins. A single parent is entitled to the full 480 days. On 1 July 2008, the Swedish government introduced a gender equality bonus in the parental insurance system. The aim is to boost gender equality in terms both of parental leave and participation in working life. The gender equality bonus is intended to encourage parents to share parental leave as evenly as possible. Under this reform, when the parent who has been home the longest works, that parent receives a tax credit while the other parent is claiming the parental benefit. On 1 July 2007, household-related services became tax-deductible. The deduction effectively reduces the cost of buying such services by around 50%. One of the aims of introducing tax relief in this area is to enable members of the household to increase their time in gainful employment, and to make it easier for women and men to combine family life and working life on equal terms.

Sources: The Swedish Institute (2013), "Gender equality: The Swedish Approach to Fairness," www.sweden.se/eng/home/society/equality/facts/gender-equality-in-sweden/; Government of Sweden (2009), *Strategy for Gender Equality in the Labour Market.*

willing to pursue higher career objectives. Childcare facilities may also provide an important answer to declining fertility rates by lowering the cost of childbearing in terms of labour market and career opportunities (EGGE, 2009). Empirical studies of the relationship between childcare costs and labour force participation also show that when costs go down, labour force participation goes up, especially among mothers (Ibid.). The greatest female employment and childcare enrolment rates are observed in the Nordic countries, the biggest investors in public formal childcare services (OECD, 2012a). A Spanish modelling study estimates that a one-EUR increase in the hourly price of daycare centres reduces the probability of employment by 32% (Borra, 2006). The study also shows that the influence of the cost of daycare services is greater than any other variable in family decisions about childcare, and subsidising this cost can be the most efficient way of orienting family choices away from internal or informal sources of care (parental care, relative care or babysitters) towards institutional sources of care (Ibid).

In addition, affordable, good-quality childcare services greatly affect decisions about return to work after childbirth, especially in the case of low-income households, employees in low-paid occupations and single parents/mothers. According to a recent study by Keck and Saraceno (2013), "the most effective policy to enable both mothers in general and low-educated mothers to remain in paid work appears to be generous provision of childcare services for children under three years".

Public service solutions for facilitating childcare support vary among OECD countries. Some countries provide access to an on-site or community facility which reserves places for parents employed at a particular workplace (27% of the countries responding to the OECD 2011 Survey on Public Employment); others provide monetary support for public employees through subsidies, allowances, reimbursements, vouchers or tax savings for childcare facilities (68%), as well as advice and referral services, including in emergency or backup care situations (see Table 3.2). Yet, the number of countries and public service institutions providing support for childcare remain low. However, onsite childcare facilities have proven to support women's participation in the workforce, to encourage the return to work after birth for working mothers and to significantly improve their retention (Box 3.12 describes an Australian case study).

For example, France specifies that inter-ministerial facilities "CESU – garde d'enfant" are available for agents under the state budget. Three different levels of support exist, taking into account the financial resources of the agent and the family situation. Ministerial and inter-ministerial systems exist to reserve a place in a "crèche" for agents under the state budget. Childcare facilities are open to every agent paid by the state. In Austria, Spain, the United States and New Zealand, the provision of childcare facilities depends on individual ministries. For example, the United States Department of State sponsors two on-site childcare centres and makes a childcare subsidy programme available to employees meeting certain criteria (US Department of State, 2014).

Such programmes also vary depending on the general availability and quality of childcare facilities in the country (e.g. the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Estonia, Finland and Slovenia). For example, in the Netherlands, there is no difference between the public and private sectors in the law, and, hence, childcare is organised through accessible childcare institutions. According to the Dutch Childcare Act, parents, employers and the government must jointly bear the costs of formal childcare. The government does so by imposing a childcare levy on all employers. Estonia, in turn, makes public childcare facilities available to everyone, with subsidies equally available to certain families. In Sweden and Finland, there is no special childcare support for employees within the central administration, but everybody receives public support.

Table 3.2. **Childcare facilities and subsidies for childcare in the public sector in OECD countries (2012)**

	Percentage of central government institutions providing employees with on-site childcare facilities	Cost of the childcare facilities subsidised by the central government institutions	Percentage of central government institutions providing employees with childcare provisions in the form of subsidies for childcare
Australia	n/a	n/a	n/a
Austria	100%	Cost partially subsidised for all employees	100%
Belgium	0%		0%
Canada	n/a	n/a	n/a
Chile	1-25%	Full market cost	100%
Denmark	n/a	n/a	n/a
Estonia	0%		0%*
Finland	0%*		0%*
France	n/a	Cost varies depending on the provider	100%
Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a
Iceland	n/a	n/a	n/a
Japan	1-25%	Full market cost	100%
Luxembourg	100%	Full market cost	Partial subsidy
Netherlands	0%*		0%*
New Zealand	n/a	n/a	n/a
Portugal	0%	Cost partially subsidised until a given pay level	100%
Slovak Republic	n/a	n/a	n/a
Slovenia	n/a	n/a	0%*
Spain	26-50%	Cost partially subsidised for all employees	Partial subsidy
Sweden	0%*		0%*
Switzerland	1-25%	Cost partially subsidised for some employees	100%
United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: * Public childcare support available for all families

Source: OECD (2011c) *Survey on Gender in Public Employment.*

There is rising pressure on governments from individuals, social groups and unions, including public sector unions (Public Services International, 2014), to develop comprehensive strategies for childcare and other types of care to enable both parents' workforce participation and to relieve burdens on families. For example, in Canada, the major public sector unions have joined childcare advocates to call on governments to rethink childcare, to develop a national childcare strategy and to establish policies enabling access to affordable and regulated care space.[19] The existing relationship between women's labour force participation and the investment in affordable public childcare services, as demonstrated by the Nordic countries, shows the road ahead for countries willing to close the employment gender gap. Comprehensive employment and work-life balance policies require that parental leave policies be supplemented by affordable quality childcare and aftercare services enabling families' well-being.

Box 3.12. **Onsite childcare facilities enabling working mothers to return to work and stay in work**

The CSL Limited's Thinking Kids Children's Centre in Victoria, Australia, is a purpose-built centre for 114 children aged up to six years. The Centre opened in 2011 to respond to a growing concern of company leadership: in 2006, the CSL found that 63% of women in the workforce who had taken maternity leave over the five years from 2001 to 2006 were no longer with the company. As the majority of CSL staff members are women (52%) and a high number of women are in management (55%) and sales (68%), poor maternity leave retention could affect the balance of skills in the company's workforce and add substantial costs to the business. A survey of employees on maternity leave confirmed that access to suitable childcare was the major barrier to keep women employees. The CSL built a new children's centre, which provides priority access for its employees, with places also available to the wider community. A not-for-profit organisation was appointed as the Centre's service provider and a management committee governs the relationship between CSL and that organisation. The committee establishes performance and operational requirements and ensures the centre continues to operate at the highest quality levels ,and meets all regulations, and is planning ahead to meet future requirements. Maternity leave retention has improved. The CSL's maternity leave return rate now sits at 90%, while resignations in the three months following return from maternity leave are at just 1.9%. An interesting statistic is that 33% of users of the centre are male employees, which shows that the benefits of readily available childcare can flow to all employees, regardless of gender.

Source: Committee for Economic Development of Australia (2013), *Women in Leadership: Understanding the Gender Gap*, www.ceda.com.au/media/310731/cedawiljune%202013final.pdf.

Leave to take care of elderly and sick family members

The declining number of children per family does not automatically translate into fewer and shorter periods of family-related leave for working women. With a fast-growing ageing population in OECD countries and increased life expectancy, the time needed to care for aged family members also rises. The shift in some OECD countries from institutionalised to home care and the growth of chronic diseases, also contribute to the fact that increasing numbers of elderly, disabled and chronically ill people rely on the support of their families. A recent study by Statistics Canada shows that nearly three in ten people aged 15 and over in Canada are family caregivers, and that they are most likely to be women. These arrangements lower the social costs associated with health services and institutionalisation, and also benefit the care receivers, allowing them to remain at home and maintain a better quality of life (Statistics Canada, 2013). However, there are some potential negative consequences, especially for caregivers, including an impact on their health,[20] workforce participation, reduced time for other activities and career perspectives; this could impact the uptake of this type of leave. The use of leave for long-term care might be even more limited in practice, because employees' fear the potential impact on career and household income (OECD, 2011f). Long-term leave to care for an elderly or sick relative is most often found in the public sector and/or in larger companies (OECD, 2011f).

Many OECD countries started acknowledging these trends; 100% of the countries responding to the OECD 2011 Survey on Public Employment provide leave to public service employees to take care of sick family members and 86% to take care of elderly family members. Such leaves can take different forms (paid or unpaid) and can significantly vary in duration. For example, in Canada, public service employees are allowed to take up to five years' leave without pay for the care of family. Also, public and private sectors employees

who have worked for an organisation for more than three months are entitled to unpaid Compassionate Care Leave to take care of a seriously ill family member at a high risk of dying within 26 weeks. In addition, employees may qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) Compassionate Care Benefits, which is a federal employment insurance programme.

Further studies and analyses will be required to better understand the trends related to family care and their implications for gender equality in employment. Similarly to childcare provisions, better access to formal elderly care is an important factor in labour market participation. However, caring for elderly or sick family members could have greater time unpredictability than caring for a child. Recognising the complex nature of care for elderly and sick family members in employment and social policies would allow for the establishment of appropriate responsive measures to reconcile work and family-related obligations and improve employment outcomes.

Flexible working conditions

Leave is not the only option to promote work-life balance. Flexible working conditions, such as flexible start and working hours, teleworking and condensed workweeks are also valued and widely used. Some 95% of the surveyed OECD countries (OECD, 2011c) provide flexible start and working hours options to their employees, 77% offer teleworking and 68% compressed workweek alternatives. Some of these practices have bigger scopes and objectives than work-life balance (for instance, teleworking and compressed workweek also contribute to achieving the objectives of environmental and transportation policies).

Policies promoting flexible working conditions play an important role in employees' potential to meet their family and community obligations and thus contribute to strengthening the social tissue (see Box 3.13). They also increase employees' satisfaction and motivation and, as a result, support increasing productivity. Flexible working conditions also contribute to the creation of a more adaptable and innovative workplace culture, which also supports productivity gains.

The agility allowed by flexible working policies in turn allows a more equal distribution of the household workload and family responsibilities between women and men and, when used wisely, can contribute to better women's participation in the workforce.

Gender equality and the future of women in public employment

In the past few decades, policies promoting gender equality in the public sector in OECD countries have allowed an increasing number of women to join the public service workforce and to enrich its contributions to society and the economy. In most countries, the number of female employees has outpaced the number of male employees in general and in central government in particular. Yet gender equality in the public sector is still developing. The gender employment gap has been reduced, but not closed, in most countries – and differences, sometimes significant, persist among OECD countries. Reaching numerical balance in gender representation could not address the real nature of gender inequalities, which are expressed in occupational – horizontal and vertical – segregation, pay inequalities and time use (part-time work, leave and flexible conditions options).

As these issues persist, achieving real gender balance (and not a female-dominated public service workforce) is still ahead. As an employer, the public service has to overcome the existing barriers by readjusting old and adopting new approaches to gender equality.

Efforts to raise awareness of gender issues and encourage men to take an active part in caring responsibilities, including through parental and paternity leaves, can help reduce gender biases across the public service. The public services' values and principles are great allies in gender equality advancement. Empowering hiring that is free of discrimination, as well as fair promotion and pay policies and practices will give women opportunities for career development and growth. Targeted learning and development programmes can help governments overcome potential deficits in women's work experience. A greater presence of women in the senior ranks of government could provide the necessary role models to encourage women to posts with greater responsibilities. Implementing more elements of performance-based (instead of tenure-based) pay and seniority-based promotions will also have a positive impact on gender inequalities. These actions will contribute to sustaining, and even increasing, the competitive advantage the public sector has in women's employment.

Box 3.13. **The role of policy in enabling women's full-time employment and better work-life balance**

Sustained economic growth, women's higher educational attainment, the important decline in fertility rates – the joint effect of these changes, amongst others, which have occurred in the last decades in OECD countries can explain the new reality in women's participation in the workforce. The combined action of educational, employment and social policies and practices promoting work-life balance have contributed to increase women's employment and full-time participation in the labour market, and, more specifically, in public sector employment. They have also permitted to ease transitions for families and to increase their well-being. The results prove the existing complex interrelations and mutually reinforcing actions between different policies and practices and therefore the importance of the combined and integrated activities of employment and work-life policies, and their impact on employment and social outcomes. Economic development is positively correlated with the share of female workers in wage employment and negatively correlated with the share of women in unpaid work, self-employment, and entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2012).

Well-designed and established public support systems for child, disabled and elderly care facilitate both women's and men's full participation in the workforce and more satisfactory life achievements. Affordable childcare leads to increased enrolment of children in formal childcare facilities and to improved female employment on a full-time and part-time basis. Access to formal elderly care also increases the hours worked by women and men and promotes greater flexibility. Bigger public investment in childcare does not necessarily lead to greater part-time employment because it may facilitate moving into full-time work or increase the quality of childcare without affecting hours per week. Higher public spending on paid leave also increases the share of full-time employment relative to working part-time and the duration of leave decreases the probability of working part-time. Higher tax rates on the second earner in a family reduce the labour force participation of women, while tax incentives to work part-time also matter (OECD, 2012a).

Despite the acknowledged impact of interrelations between policies, a few countries have opted for a more integrated approach to resolve gender inequalities: for example, the Netherlands' Crisis Pact, enacted in 2009, packaged together extensions in parental leave, childcare access, and public benefits for self-employed women (ILO, 2012). The economic downturn has further reinforced the importance of integrated policies and actions to strengthen gender employment equality advances and to close existing gender gaps.

Sources: World Bank (2012), *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*; OECD (2012a), *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*, OECD Publishing, Paris; International Labour Organization (2012), *Global Employment Trends for Women 2012*.

Understanding the multiple and complex gender (and women's) employment issues in the public service is key for the development of sound policies aiming to close the gender employment and pay gaps. Good demographic data will lay the foundation for a comprehensive picture of the workforce: who the female and male employees are; their educational and employment achievements, family status, etc. Further studies on diversification of career paths for female employees and perceptual data would provide better understanding of employees' motivations, career and life objectives, performance drivers and satisfaction with work and working conditions. Only comprehensive data about the public service workforce, including both women and men, will permit governments to build a deep understanding about the persisting gender gaps and to develop evidence-based policies. A knowledge base, including wider-scope research results and good practices from around the world, will not only serve as a policy development tool, but will also allow the development of evidence-based, practical and customised solutions.

Key policy recommendations

Gaps remain in women's equal access to senior positions, pay and working conditions in the public domain. In line with the Recommendation of the OECD Council on Gender Equality on Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, addressing these gaps calls for a comprehensive and systematic set of measures, including:

- ✓ *Develop specific mechanisms that improve the gender balance in leadership positions and across policy sectors and occupational categories*, e.g. target-setting for managers, mentoring programmes and networks for women in male-dominated professions;
- ✓ *Strengthen leadership and enhance management and executive accountability* for ensuring gender balance at all levels and occupational groups, including through performance agreements;
- ✓ *Address gender equality in educational choices* to reduce horizontal work segregation by gender;
- ✓ *Promote the flexibility, transparency, and fairness of public sector employment systems and policies* to ensure fair pay and equal opportunities for women and men with a mix of backgrounds and experience;
- ✓ *Improve work-life balance options*, particularly opportunities for flexible work arrangements and workload management. More specifically, facilitate continuous support systems for child, disabled, and elderly care to enable women's and men's full participation in the workforce and empower men to take on more family-related responsibilities; ensure that those who use workplace flexibilities are not penalised for doing so;
- ✓ *Incorporate part-time and other time flexibility options in career patterns*; promote part-time as a temporary rather than permanent solution and encourage a more gender-equal use of part-time work; develop deliberate polices and transition paths supporting the move from part-time work to full-time, well-paid jobs for women willing to be employed on a full-time basis;

- ✓ *Develop broader, more cause-specific measures to address the persisting gender pay gap*, including adoption of pay equity regulations; perform objective and thorough desk audits to ensure pay equality and equity; target low-paid and/or female-dominated sectors to promote equal pay for women; and ensure effective channels of recourse in challenging the wage gap;
- ✓ *Maximise use of public service employee surveys* by incorporating questions about gender issues, including identifying women's and men's motivation, needs and satisfaction with employment conditions and career progression;
- ✓ *Promote merit-based recruitment, while giving preference to equally qualified women as a transitional measure in public sector employment*. Develop concrete measures to ensure the effective removal of the systemic barriers that continue to exist within hiring and staffing processes, including caregiver bias in employment decisions;
- ✓ *Implement more elements of performance-based, instead of tenure-based, pay and promotions* based on robust performance measurement frameworks, to positively impact gender inequalities;
- ✓ *Maintain key institutional roles and responsibilities for promoting gender equality in the public service*. These institutions should be adequately funded and resourced, and have links to executive teams to ensure that their programmes are effective.

Notes

1. USA Presidential memorandum, 10 May 2013.
2. See Australian Government (2013), "The Business Case for Gender Equality", Workplace Gender Equality Agency, available at www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/2013-04-29%20BRANDED%20FINAL%20businesscase%20for%20web.pdf.
3. The "OECD 2011 Survey on Gender in Public Employment'' was conducted by the Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development (GOV) under the umbrella of the OECD's *Gender Initiative on Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship*, which was launched in 2011.
4. The OECD's definition of general government sector consists of: *i)* all units of central, state or local government; *ii)* all social security funds at each level of government; *iii)* all non-market non-profit institutions that are controlled and mainly financed by government units. The sector does not include public corporations, even when all the equity of such corporations is owned by government units.
5. The OECD's definition of central/national/federal government refers to the institutions controlled and financed at the central level of government. Depending on the country, it is also called the national or federal government.
6. In Switzerland, the data includes army and armed frontier guards; hence the exact representation of women is difficult to gauge.
7. Presentation made by Wojciech Zieliński, Deputy Director, Civil Service Department, Poland, to the Public Employment and Management Network on 22-23 October 2012, OECD, Paris.
8. These are usually the positions one to two levels below executive jobs (i.e. directors).

9. See European Commission (n.d.), "Good Practices and Lessons Learned from Germany", Programme of exchange of good practices on gender equality.

10. Ibid.

11. Note by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to "Cyprus" relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue".

12. Note by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union: The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

13. Gender quotas are targets (often annual) to increase women's representation in the public service (Glossary/Definitions of terms used in the OECD 2011 Survey on Gender in Public Employment).

14. Part de femmes dans la Fonction Publique: Quotas et objectifs chiffres en Europe.

15. Ibid.

16. See OECD (2012d), "Human Resources Management Country Profiles. Austria", available at www.oecd.org/gov/ pem/OECD%20HRM%20Profile%20-%20Austria.pdf; Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, sektioniii.bka.gv.at/crossmentoring/cm_start.php.

17. For more information, see U.S. Office of Personnel Management and U.S. General Services Administration (2010).

18. See Haas and Hwang (2008), Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel (2007), cited by OECD (2012a).

19. See Rethink! (n.d.), www.rethinkchildcare.ca.

20. A Canadian study found a strong correlation between heavy responsibilities for elder care (in the absence of appropriate support), job absenteeism and emotional, physical and mental fatigue – and hence greater likelihood of poor health outcomes for employees. (Duxbury and Higgis, 2003).

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Chapter 4

Institutional dimensions of gender equality

This chapter examines institutional dimensions for advancing the gender equality agenda. The analysis in this chapter is largely based on the OECD 2011 Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership. The chapter highlights the main challenges for advancing gender equality identified by OECD countries, such as limited accountability mechanisms and a lack of awareness within the public service. It then argues that strategic government capacities and mainstreaming gender into regular policy-making cycle are critical for the effective design and implementation of the gender equality agenda. The required government capacities include the ability to promote a co-ordinated, whole-of-government approach to gender equality through national gender equality strategies and action plans, the effective allocation of roles and responsibilities across public institutions, robust accountability, oversight and coordination mechanisms, effective channels for making the voices of different groups of women and men heard, and tools for gender-sensitive policy making, supported by sound evidence of policy impacts on women and men. The chapter also provides an overview of institutional practices across OECD countries, highlights good practices and outlines a number of policy recommendations that aim to support governments in strengthening national frameworks for gender equality.

Key findings

- The effective implementation of gender equality policies can be hampered by limited government accountability, lack of awareness and analytical skills, as well as a lack of monitoring mechanisms within the public sector.
- The placement of gender equality institutions within governments is indicative of the significance attached to their mandates and functions. The lack of visibility and authority of such institutions may limit their ability to implement a "whole-of-government" approach to gender equality across policy areas.
- Oversight institutions such as parliaments, supreme audit institutions, and gender equality and human rights commissions play a critical role in ensuring that the gender equality agenda stays on track.
- Inclusive policy outcomes depend on inclusive and gender-sensitive policy and service delivery processes that integrate the views and needs of diverse stakeholders through public consultation and assessment of gender impacts, supported by robust gender-disaggregated data.
- The systematic collection, monitoring and dissemination of reliable and relevant gender-disaggregated statistics are crucial for a successful gender-sensitive policy process and informed policy choices. However, significant evidence gaps remain in a number of policy areas, such as gender-based violence, work-life balance practices, entrepreneurship, defence and the environment.
- While gender impact assessments are increasingly used by policy-makers to assess the effects of policy choices on men and women, this practice often remains sporadic and limited to primary legislative acts.
- Incorporating a gender perspective into the budgetary cycle through gender-responsive budgeting reveals much about a government's priorities for its citizens and signals its commitment to gender equality. Half of the countries responding to the OECD survey apply this practice at the national level, but its use at the sub-national levels is rare.

Introduction

Government capacity to overcome persisting gender gaps in the public sector and beyond is strongly linked to its ability to design and implement gender-responsive and evidence-based policies across all policy sectors, from employment and entrepreneurship to education and finance. This calls for an approach based on:

- Clear and coherent national strategies and action plans for gender equality;
- Strong public institutions with clear and effective mandates and responsibilities, supported by mechanisms to ensure accountability[1] for fulfilling gender equality and mainstreaming commitments (see Box 4.1);
- Tools for evidence-based and inclusive policy making and implementation that account for potentially different effects on women and men, across policy sectors; and
- Reliable gender-disaggregated data and information for making informed policy decisions, based on sound evidence.

Yet, the OECD Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership revealed that the implementation of this approach remains a challenge. Countries responding to the survey identified the following key barriers to the effective pursuit of gender mainstreaming and inclusive policies (see Figure 4.1):

- Limited accountability mechanisms in the public sector for advancing gender equality;
- Lack of awareness within the public service on possibly different impacts of policy choices on women and men;
- Lack of mechanisms for monitoring the impact of gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives;
- Lack of gender analysis skills within the public service; and
- Lack of funding and limited ability to adopt a whole-of-government approach to gender equality reforms.

Box 4.1. **Defining gender equality and gender mainstreaming**

Gender equality describes the absence of obvious or hidden disparities among individuals based on gender. Disparities can include discrimination in terms of opportunities, resources, services, benefits, decision-making power and influence (Wikigender).

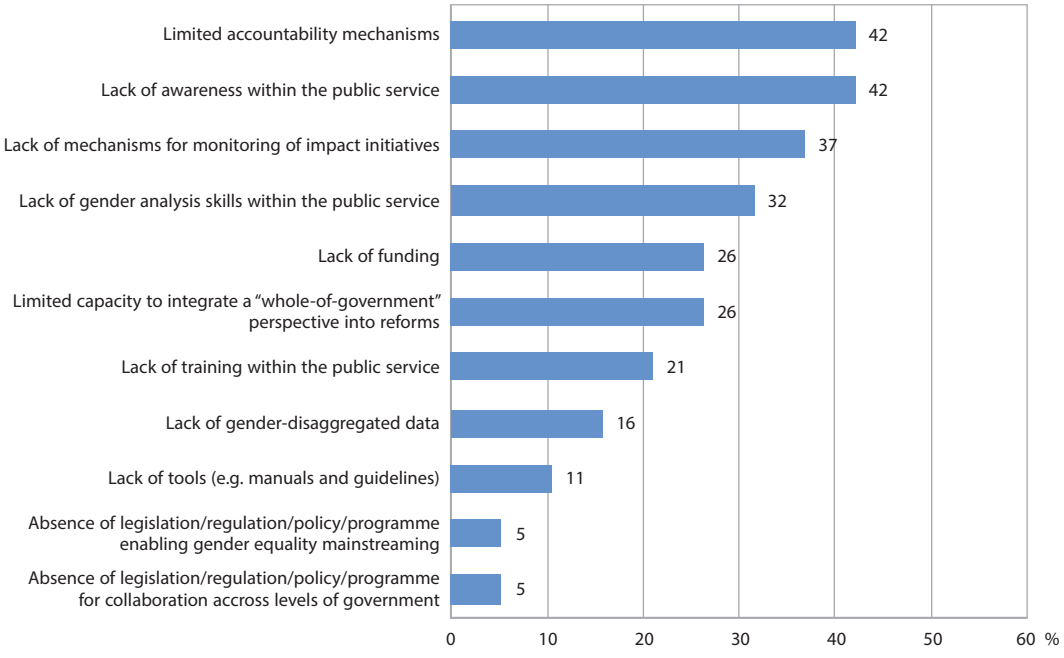
Gender mainstreaming is a process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, so that the gender perspective becomes an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes (United Nations, 1997). It encompasses the ability to anticipate the potentially differential impact of policy actions on women and men, as well as the ability to design policy actions that are not "gender-blind" but "gender-sensitive". Policy actions are gender-sensitive if they recognise the potentially different interests and needs of women and men based on their potentially different social experiences, opportunities, roles and resources.

Source: OECD (2012), "Gender Equality: The Economic Case, Social Norms, and Public Policies", in *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*, OECD Publishing.

Limited accountability mechanisms constitute a key concern for Ireland, Norway, Spain and Switzerland, while lack of awareness of the need to mainstream gender considerations into the policy process is a key challenge for the Czech Republic, Israel, Luxembourg and Mexico.

These barriers may constitute serious impediments to advancing effective gender equality. As such, this chapter will explore the reasons for remaining gaps in institutional and policy practices in OECD member countries to advance gender equality and mainstreaming. Specifically, it will survey the practices and experience of national gender institutions along the four dimensions outlined above, including the strategies and plans underpinning gender equality; the design and responsibilities of gender institutions; mechanisms for accountability and compliance with gender equality requirements and analyses of how governments incorporate gender considerations into their decision-making processes. This chapter will also examine how oversight institutions contribute to the longevity, sustainability and effectiveness of gender equality reform. It will provide an overview of good practices related to the availability and use of gender-disaggregated data for evidence-based and inclusive decision making, gender impact assessments and the use of gender budgeting for designing, implementing and evaluating gender-sensitive polices, programmes and budgets. Policy recommendations to strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender equality appear in the conclusion.

Figure 4.1. **Barriers to effective pursuit of gender mainstreaming and equality policies**[2] **(2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Gender equality strategies and action plans

Achieving gender equality, and, hence, empowering both women and men to fully contribute to society for more inclusive and sustainable growth, demand a clear and comprehensive vision of a gender-equal society supported by a sound strategic plan to realise specific goals and objectives. A vision statement on gender equality can inspire the redefinition of more equitable social, political and economic roles for both genders to ensure that every woman and man can maximise their potential. Such a vision can set new expectations for the attitudes and behaviour of both men and women. A strategic plan can structure national gender equality plans, and guide the operationalisation of the institutional reforms necessary to meet domestic targets and align with international standards of gender equality. Together, an inspiring vision and a carefully crafted strategic plan can chart a course of reform and facilitate an effective communications approach that will engage a wide range of stakeholders (e.g. women's organisations, key decision-makers at all levels of government, non-profit actors, as well as men and women citizens) as partners in ending gender inequality.

Many countries rely on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as an excellent starting point for designing a comprehensive and sustainable gender mainstreaming approach that offers a holistic vision of gender equality, and an overview of the measures necessary to effectively implement such a vision. This strategic approach can target the legal, regulatory and institutional reforms required to remove barriers to women's equitable involvement in the political, economic and social development of their societies and incorporate a commitment to including both men and women in the process.

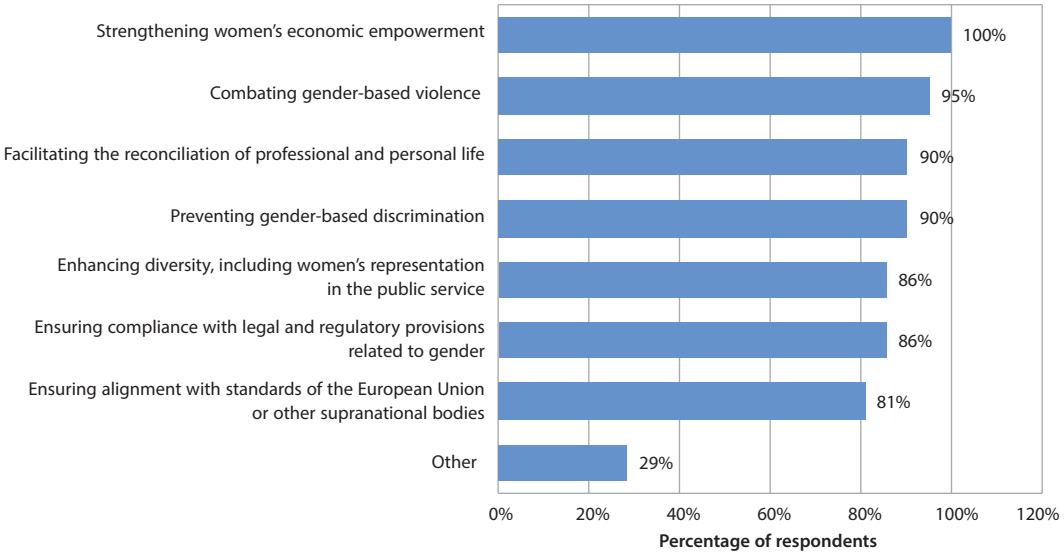
Most OECD countries have developed strategies for gender equality. According to the 2011 OECD Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership, these strategies mainly focus on (see Figure 4.2):

- Strengthening women's economic empowerment;
- Combatting gender-based violence;
- Facilitating the reconciliation of professional and personal life;
- Preventing gender-based discrimination; and
- Enhancing diversity and compliance with gender equality laws and policies.

National strategies on gender equality are an excellent vehicle for articulating an integrated approach to delivering on both international commitments, such as violence against women, and specific priorities in the national context. Japan's Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality (2010) focuses on gender equality for men and children, aging and gender equality in regional development, disaster prevention and the environment (see Box 4.2). In Mexico, gender equality is included as a crosscutting principle in the National Development Plan for 2013-2018. The main objective of this principle is to promote a process of profound change in government institutions, in order to prevent gender stereotypes that enhance inequality, exclusion and discrimination.

Although most national strategies and action plans on gender equality include a three- to five-year horizon, some countries opt for a much longer-term vision. Hungary's current National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, for example, sets out guidelines and priorities through to 2021.

Figure 4.2. **Thematic focus of gender equality strategies (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Box 4.2. **Japan's "Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality"**

Japan's national plan, approved by the Cabinet in 2010, aims to address a number of issues pinpointed in the latest CEDAW report on Japan (2009) but also to work on problems "caused by economic and social globalisation and changed social conditions", including "Japan's aging society and declining birthrate, changes in the Japanese family and regional communities, the prolonged recession and deepened sense of despair, increases in the number of non-regular workers and widening poverty and wealth disparity."

The Third Basic Plan places new emphasis on:

- Revitalising the economy and society through women's active participation;
- Gender equality for men and children;
- A response to low-income individuals, people with disabilities and migrant workers;
- The elimination of all forms of violence against women;
- The promotion of gender equality in local communities.

Pressing future issues include:

- Promoting effective leadership positions for women;
- Realising social systems that allow for more diverse lifestyles (such as single-parent, women-led households);
- Rebuilding employment and safety nets;
- Enhancing systems to promote gender equality;

The plan identifies 15 priority fields and outlines long-term policy directions through to 2020, accompanied by detailed performance objectives for each priority area.

Source: The Government of Japan (2010), "Summary of Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality."

To achieve the expected results, gender equality strategies should be defined broadly as an explicit, dynamic and consistent whole-of-government policy to advance gender equality. Experience in governance and regulatory areas suggests that an effective gender equality policy should be adopted at the highest political levels, contain explicit and measurable gender equality standards and objectives, provide for continued capacity across government institutions and be supported by clear accountability, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Indeed, almost all strategies in OECD member countries promote a whole-of-government approach and establish specific objectives for gender equality in the country. Around 70% of respondents set out gender equality principles (71%) and include specific initiatives (67%). Over 50% of countries report establishing measurable targets and outlining clear roles and responsibilities. Moving forward, however, ensuring the effective implementation and co-ordination of gender initiatives would require the identification of clear roles and responsibilities across governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, supported by realistic targets and both long- and medium-term strategic horizons to support the sustainability of gender equality efforts.

Institutional arrangements for gender equality

OECD governance and gender equality reviews confirm that a whole-of-government approach to gender equality is the most effective strategy for achieving gender equal societies for inclusive growth and country competitiveness. Such an approach requires effective institutions responsible for promoting gender equality, with clear roles, mandates and co-ordination mechanisms to implement policies and practices necessary to achieve women's full empowerment and mobilisation.

Indeed, General Recommendation 6 of the CEDAW Committee also confirmed the need to establish and/or strengthen national gender institutions and procedures at a high level of government and with adequate resources, commitment and authority to:

1. advise on the impact of all government policies on women;
2. comprehensively monitor the situation of women; and
3. help formulate new policies and effectively implement strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination.

The decade immediately following the Beijing Conference (1995-2005) witnessed the rapid expansion across many countries of institutional mechanisms mandated to co-ordinate and fulfil national commitments to gender equality and promote women's empowerment. The Beijing Platform for Action outlined an expanded and catalytic role for national gender institutions, prioritising the promotion of gender equality and the co-ordination of gender mainstreaming across all policy fields as central to the mandates of central gender institutions.[3]

Currently, these central gender institutions encompass a range of specialised state bodies charged with realising gender equality. These institutions are recognised globally as critical instruments for ensuring that public policy minimises different impacts on women and men and, more broadly, for creating societies free from gender discrimination, to foster national well-being and social cohesion, and mobilising the potential of every member of the society.

The effectiveness of these institutions, both system-wide and at the ministry level, depends significantly on the clarity of roles and responsibilities across government organisations. These must be supported by effective capacities for designing, planning, implementing, monitoring

and evaluating gender-equality strategies and reforms, with sufficient checks and balances, resources and accountability mechanisms. This applies both to stand-alone initiatives related to women's empowerment and to mainstreaming gender across all government plans and policies. Centres of government, such as cabinet offices and ministries of finance, should have the capacity to ensure that line ministries and agencies take into account gender impacts, among other considerations, when designing their policies, initiatives and budgets. Gender-specific agencies, such as gender equality ministries, usually provide gender-related advice to line ministries and the centre of government. Independent monitoring mechanisms, such as gender equality or human rights commissions, have the responsibility to provide independent recourse to complaints related to gender-based discrimination and oversee the implementation of gender equality commitments of the government. Such independent oversight bodies should have sufficient authority over national government institutions. They can help provide checks on various government entities, and also contribute to the longevity and sustainability of gender equality reform during periods of change in the political environment.

Location, authority, resources

Over 160 countries have put in place some form of national gender institutions. These mechanisms vary substantially in terms of institutional design, location in government, functions, resources and effectiveness. The range of strategies and instruments used by central gender institutions to conduct gender analysis has grown exponentially and the mechanisms themselves have multiplied and diversified horizontally and vertically (Johan, 2010). National mechanisms for gender equality now include institutions within different branches of the state (legislative, executive and judicial), as well as independent accountability and advisory bodies.

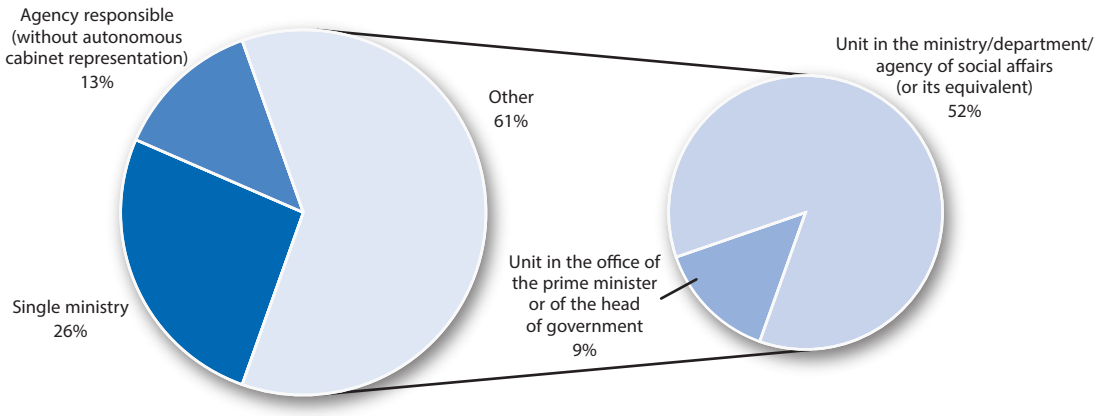
Regardless of the diversity of institutional arrangements, the location of gender equality institutions within government bureaucracies and the leadership assigned to these institutions are indicative of their status, and the significance attached to their mandates and functions. Budgets, organisational design, human resources, scope of influence and access, implementation, monitoring and co-ordination roles all may be dependent on the institutional location and authority. Gender equality institutions are often confronted with challenges related to a lack of authority, visibility and the leverage necessary to co-ordinate a "whole-of-government" approach across policy fields regardless of their institutional designs. Maximising the effectiveness of gender equality institutions requires:

- Clearly defined mandates, authority, and mechanisms for executive key functions;
- Adequate budget, resources and staff with competence in policy, analysis, advocacy, communication and monitoring to implement the mandate;
- Strong political commitment; and
- Location at the highest possible level of government.

While almost all OECD countries have central gender institutions tasked with reducing gender inequalities, establishing and implementing effective whole-of-government strategies to close gender gaps remains a significant challenge. There is no unique approach and no common trend in institutional settings for national gender mechanisms. Instead, a variety of designs for gender equality institutions exists (see Figure 4.3):

- Central gender institutions with the status of a separate ministry enjoy high visibility, a role at the elite level of decision making and access to cabinet submissions. This prime positioning within the bureaucracy helps the gender institution to

Figure 4.3. **Central gender equality institutions (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership*.

concentrate on exercising its catalytic role in promoting gender equality. Belgium, France, New Zealand and Portugal use single national mechanisms with the status of a ministry or agency specifically dedicated to women and/or equality. The existence of such stand-alone ministries sends a strong political message about the government's commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality, and facilitates opportunities on the part of the national gender institution to influence budgetary decisions that may impact gender equality (Johan, 2010). Single ministries with a minister for gender equality also bring visibility and the opportunity to advocate for gender equality concerns within the cabinet. Yet, it is essential to ensure clear and powerful mandates and sufficient resources for these institutions to place gender considerations effectively on top of the policy agenda. Even with powerful and clear mandates and resources, gender institutions without the support of political leadership may be confronted with significant obstacles without the support of political leadership.

- In Austria, Denmark, Spain, Germany, Morocco, Greece, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Korea, Turkey and Norway, national gender institutions are paired with other portfolios within a single ministry, such as Norway's Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion; Germany's Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; and Turkey's Ministry of Family and Social Policies. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality in Greece is housed within the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and E-Government. This is also the dominant institutional pattern in the African context, where national gender institutions tend to be located in ministries that combine gender equality with other mandates, such as South Africa's Ministry of Women, Children and People with Disabilities. Such arrangements are also common in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Abdurazakova, 2010). Ministers or deputy ministers usually lead national gender institutions that function as separate ministries or those that function as part of another ministry, providing high-level support. The positioning of institutional mechanisms for gender equality within ministries may increase opportunities for work across government on specific policy matters and enhance outreach work in certain sectors, but a marginalised location also can seriously constrain the overall policy strategy development, co-ordination efforts and the capacity to effectively

monitor gender mainstreaming across government (Johan, 2010). Attention to women's equality may be sidelined by the competing demands of other portfolios; additionally, institutions that combine gender equality with either family or children's affairs may risk defining women narrowly in their roles as mothers and caregivers.

- Central gender institutions can also be located within the office of the head of government or state, as in Israel and the United States. This affords excellent access to the apex of decision making and facilitates co-ordination, monitoring, accountability and policy development. In Japan, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality is located within the Cabinet Office's Gender Equality Bureau and is chaired by the Prime Minister with the Chief Cabinet Secretary and the Minister for Measures for Declining Birthrates and Gender Equality serving as deputies. The Headquarters comprises all cabinet ministers and high-level government officials.[4] While providing easy access to decision making, such models often have ministerial positions assuming a range of duties beyond a focus on gender equality.
- Gender equality councils or commissions that function as autonomous bodies with an independent constitutional status or in consultation with the government offer another set of institutional arrangements for implementing gender equality policies. This pattern is more common in Latin America (Ibid.) Mexico utilises it with members of a council drawn from both the government and civil society (see Box 4.3). Such a structure provides significant flexibility in terms of activities and focus, but the distance from the apex of decision-making may limit its resource base and constrain its influence. Advisory councils or commissions without independent constitutional status may risk being disbanded by governments that do not prioritise gender concerns.[5]

Each of these approaches has its strengths and challenges. Issues of authority, visibility, funding, capacity and accountability can affect any of these institutional types. In general, the central gender equality institution acts as a focal point for promoting gender and diversity policies and is responsible for ensuring a whole-of-government approach. The central co-ordination body is responsible for developing the strategy and the government-wide policies, for monitoring progress, promoting the benefits, and providing guidance and support to line ministries and agencies for policy implementation.

Limited capacities and budgets can significantly constrain the ability of gender institutions to support the government-wide commitment of delivering on gender equality. Indeed, about 30% of countries responding to the *OECD Survey on National Gender Institutions, Public Policies and Leadership* identified lack of funding among the top barriers for advancing gender equality reforms. The OECD countries' experience shows that mandates derived from constitutions or enshrined in law afford national mechanisms a greater sense of political legitimacy and stability, accompanied by a sufficient resource base, than mandates originating from a governmental decree. Having both the statutory authority to propose policy and the proximity to the executive or central administrative structures increases the influence of national gender institutions. Finland's national gender institution is an instructive example. From its beginnings in the 1970s as the Council for Equality between Men and Women, it functioned as an executive commission but with a small staff of between five and eight employees. It was relocated from the Prime Minister's Office to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, farther removed from central decision making, but received statutory responsibility for proposing gender equality reforms. This facilitated more successful intervention in prostitution debates, job training and political representation (World Bank, 2012).

Box 4.3. **Mexico's National Institute for Women**

Mexico's National Women's Institute (INMUJERES) functions as a decentralised body, not located in any unit or agency of the Mexican government. The Institute uses the following structure:

- a Governing Board comprised of the heads of the departments of the Federal Public Administration;
- a Consultative Council that acts as an advisory body and is representative of political and private organisations, civil society and academic institutions;
- a Social Council that acts as an organ of analysis and evaluation for public policies and projects, and which draws its membership from individuals in the public, private and social sectors who have distinguished themselves by their work in fostering gender equity; and
- permanent guest members, including two representatives of the Mexican Supreme Court and two representatives of the Federal Board of Judges, along with members from the political parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies.

Under Article 25 of the General Law on Equality between Women and Men, it is the responsibility of the National Women's Institute to:

- Propose guidelines for national policy;
- Co-ordinate programmes for equality between women and men for the agencies and entities of the Federal Public Administration;
- Promote, co-ordinate and review programmes and services related to equality;
- Determine the timeframe and characteristics of the information that should be provided by the agencies and entities of the Federal Public Administration;
- Formulate proposals on the allocation of resources required by programmes on equality between women and men;
- Support co-ordination among the institutions of the Federal Public Administration in order to educate and train their personnel on the subject of equality between women and men; and
- Further the participation of civil society in promoting equality between women and men.

Mexico's INMUJERES is also linked and co-ordinating with a Women's Institute in each state.

Source: Law of the National Women's Institute; General Law on Equality Between Women and Men.

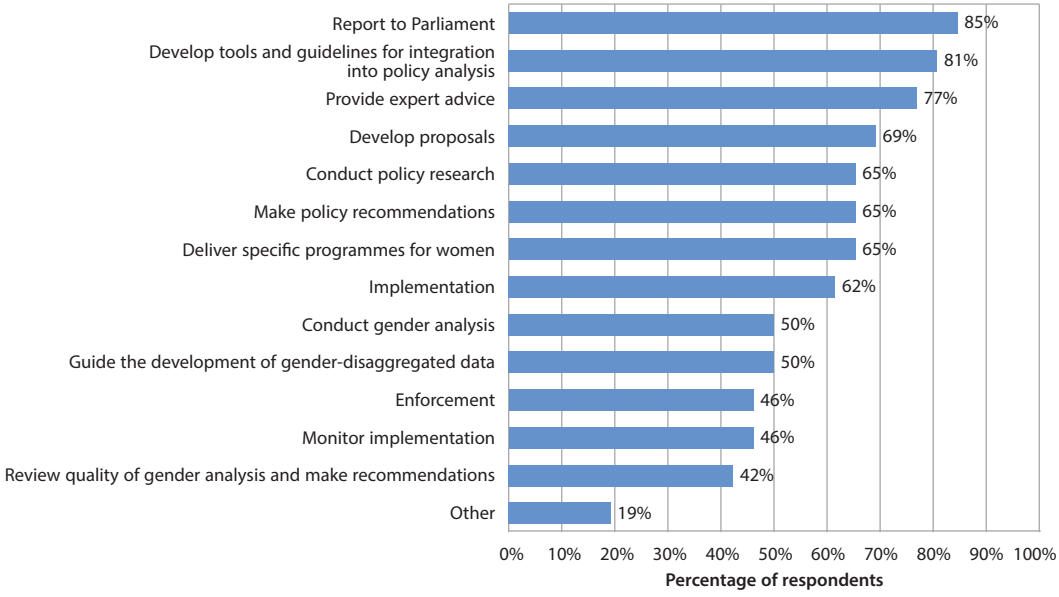
National gender institutions can maximise their effectiveness when harmonisation occurs among government action plans and policies, and they enjoy political commitment at the highest level. Chile's National Service for Women, SERNAM, benefitted from a Chair with ministerial status. In this case, the gender institution's leadership, along with a sector-specific approach to gender mainstreaming, improved its capacity to influence inter-sectoral dialogue with line ministries and the national gender institution advocated successfully for legislation on domestic violence and gender discrimination, including childcare for seasonal day workers and maternity leave for domestic employees. The Chilean example, however, confirms the need for gender institutions to have adequate

human resourcing. With just under 10% of its 270 total staff under permanent contracts and a lack of specialised personnel, its organisational capacity was constrained. The World Bank reports that reorganisation initiatives further debilitated the institution, leading to the discontinuation of some of its most important functions.[6] This example confirms that high-level leadership committed to gender equality goals with access to potential political allies can be crucial to the mechanism's effectiveness and long-term viability.

Functions of central gender equality institutions

The mandates of central gender institutions often involve knowledge generation, provision of operational support for gender reforms, legislative reform and policymaking, and even service delivery, with the main functions being reporting to parliament on the state of gender equality (85%), developing guidelines for implementing gender concerns into policy analysis (81%), providing expert advice to other public bodies on gender equality (77%), developing proposals for legislation or policies (69%), conducting policy research (65%) and delivering specific programmes (65%), making policy recommendations to other ministries (65%) and implementing gender initiatives (62%) (see Figure 4.4.).

Figure 4.4. **Main responsibilities of central gender institutions in OECD countries (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Yet, less than half of gender institutions have been involved in monitoring the implementation of public gender initiatives (46%) and reviewing the quality of gender analysis (46%). These areas, however, have been identified among the top barriers for promoting gender equality by OECD countries. The lack of monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the effect of gender equality initiatives was identified as a major barrier by over 30% of responding countries, and lack of gender analysis skills by almost 40% of respondents (see Figure 4.7). As such, building capacity in gender institutions and across the public sector in these areas appears to be critical to address the remaining equality gaps.

Gender focal points

Almost all OECD countries (47% – always, and 53% – in some cases) participating in the OECD study have permanent staff members dealing with gender issues across the government at all levels (i.e. gender focal points). These staff members are usually located in line ministries and agencies, and are mainly responsible for administering specific laws or regulations related to gender equality (64%), collecting data (64%), developing sectoral plans (64%), training (55%) and developing gender-sensitive personnel policies (50%).

A good example of gender focal points comes from Spain (see Box 4.4). The gender unit serves as the focal point for ensuring that questions of gender equality and mainstreaming are brought to the executive table, and for supporting the executive in exercising its leadership on this issue. To fulfil its mandate, the co-ordinator requires ready access to the executive team and, ideally, reports to the head of a government organisation. Gender units may form an inter-agency network and can participate in government-wide working groups established by the gender equality hub to discuss documents to be adopted at the inter-agency level. While the creation of ministerial gender units may create extra layers of administrative hierarchy and may slow down decision-making, it appears to be an important transitional measure to boost gender equality reforms at the ministerial level.

Box 4.4. **Spain's ministerial and university Equality Units**

In order to integrate the principle of gender mainstreaming into all public policies, Spain introduced Equality Units in all ministries through Act 3/2007 of 22 March 2007 for Effective Equality Between Women and Men (Article 77). All ministries, in the scope of their areas of competence, entrust one management body with duties relating to the principle of equality between women and men, and, in particular, with:

- providing gender-relevant statistical information;
- conducting surveys to foster equality between women and men in their respective areas of activity;
- advising the ministry's competency bodies on the formulation of their gender-impact reports;
- improving employees' understanding of the scope and significance of the principle of gender equality; and
- overseeing compliance policies to effectively implement Act 3/2007 and the principle of gender equality.

The Women's Institute supplies training courses for staff working in equality units, which have become the focal points to monitor the progress of gender equality and mainstreaming measures in the State Administration. With the University Reformation Act 4/2007, universities also started to create Equality Units. Nearly 30 Equality Units have been formed in different public universities. In addition, the Women's Institute organised a summer course in August 2010 to evaluate progress on gender equality at the university level (presence of women and men in educational centres' control and governing organs; introduction of new subjects with a gender perspective; creation of specific post-graduate courses, etc.).

Source: Information provided by the Government of Spain.

Oversight and accountability mechanisms

The extent to which institutional gender frameworks provide for the exercise of independent oversight and include meaningful accountability mechanisms also serves as valuable indicators for assessing their potential impact. Cross-national research confirms the critical importance of an oversight body with sufficient authority over all federal government institutions to both ensure a comprehensive approach to promoting gender initiatives and keep gender concerns on the legislative agenda. Many OECD countries have oversight mechanisms that act both as pre-emptive/oversight institutions or "corrective" institutions (institutions of recourse). For example, most countries established pre-emptive/oversight institutions for ensuring gender equality (parliaments or parliamentary committees, see Box 4.5, commissions in political executives or advisory councils to ministries or the political executive), while 68% of countries have institutions that use "corrective" methods for addressing gender equality grievances (ombudsmen or judicial commissions that adjudicate claims).

The most popular oversight institutions for accountability include parliament (55% of respondents) and an ombuds office (55% of respondents) (see Figure 4.5). Half of the 22 respondents to the OECD survey indicated that they use parliamentary committees in charge of gender equality as a tool for oversight on the progress of gender equality (see Figure 4.6). Such Committees also make an important element of gender-sensitive parliaments (see the International Parliamentary Union's action plan for gender-sensitive parliaments, which promotes the integration of gender mainstreaming in parliamentary activities, Box 4.5). While less common, independent permanent gender commissions and independent permanent Human Rights commissions were used as oversight institutions in 20-30% of countries.

Gender equality parliamentary committees have proven quite effective in some contexts. In Canada, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, created in 2004, is mandated to oversee the status of Women Canada – the lead national mechanism at the federal level (see Box 3.7). This all-party Committee comprised of male and female members of Parliament and chaired by a member of the Official Opposition, focuses on analysing a range of issues of importance to women, scrutinising government decisions and policy advocacy. In addition, the Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts regularly requires departments and agencies to report on how gender analysis informs their decision making. The involvement of the Office of the Auditor General in overseeing the commitment of the Canadian federal government to gender mainstreaming has proven particularly useful. In 2009, Canada's Office of the Auditor General examined 68 programmes, policy initiatives and acts of legislation across seven federal departments to ascertain the integration of gender analysis into policy making. The findings resulted in a series of recommendations around the role of central agencies in co-ordinating gender impact assessments for proposals submitted for Cabinet approval.[7]

In the United States, the Obama administration created the White House Council on Women and Girls to ensure "that all Cabinet and Cabinet-level agencies consider how their policies and programmes respond to women and girls' needs and impact them."[8] The Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison chairs this Cabinet committee; membership includes the heads of every federal agency and major White House office (see Box 4.6).

Accountability mechanisms including ombuds offices (such as Norway's Anti-Discrimination and Equality Ombud) or equality boards are increasingly active in all regions. These may be located within the executive or legislative branch. Their effectiveness, however, varies across contexts. A recent study of national gender institutions in southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia concludes that the lack of efficient

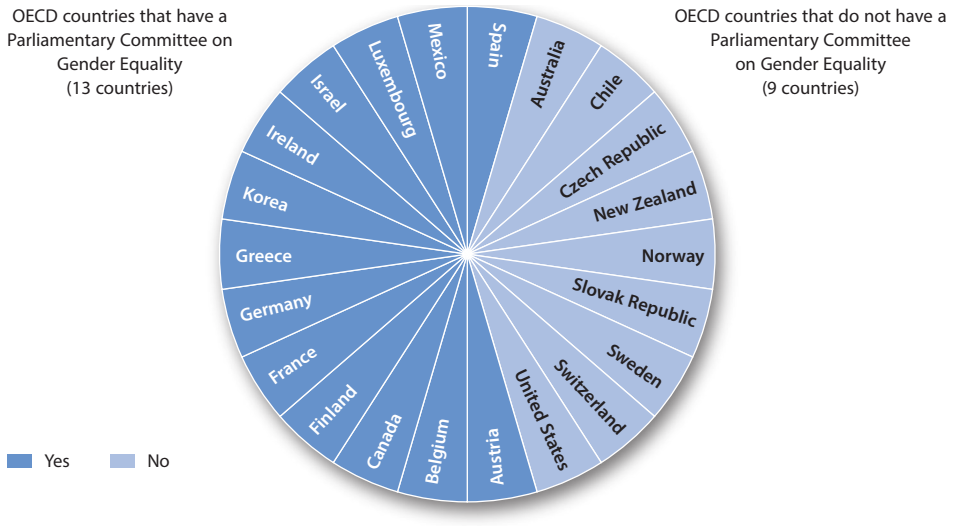
accountability measures, in combination with weak civil societies, seriously impedes the work of gender equality mechanisms in those countries (Abdurazakova, 2010). In the MENA region, there are few gender units or caucuses in parliaments, in the judiciary and ombuds offices. Ombuds offices do exist inside national mechanisms (Egypt), but not in the national Ombuds offices (Jad, 2010). In other settings, accountability mechanisms can prove quite effective. One notable example of an enforcement mechanism is Puerto Rico's national gender institution, which enjoys quasi-judicial powers to fine public officials and private institutions that fail to comply with national gender equality policies (Johan, 2010).

Figure 4.5. **National oversight institutions for gender equality (2012)**

	Ombuds Office	Commission in the Political Executive (committee appointed by the Prime Minister)	Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission established by law	Independent Permanent Gender Equality Commission established by law	Parliament	Parliamentary Committee dedicated to gender equality/ women's affairs	Judicial body: commission or office located in the Ministry of Justice or that adjudicates claims or advocates in court	Advisory council: lay panel advisory to ministries or political executive
Australia	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●
Austria	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	○
Belgium	○	○	○	●	●	●	○	○
Canada	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	○
Chile	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	○
Czech Republic	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●
Finland	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	●
France	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	○
Germany	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	○
Greece	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	○
Ireland	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○
Israel	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	●
Korea	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	●
Luxembourg	●	○	●	●	○	●	○	●
Mexico	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
New Zealand	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	●
Norway	●	●	○	○	●	○	○	○
Slovak Republic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
Spain	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○
Sweden	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Switzerland	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
United States	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●
Total OECD								
● Yes	12	9	6	7	12	13	8	10
○ No	10	13	16	15	10	9	14	12

Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Figure 4.6. **Parliamentary committees on gender equality in OECD countries (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Box 4.5. **IPU plan of action for gender-sensitive parliaments**

The Action Plan for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments developed by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) calls for gender mainstreaming in parliaments. Gender mainstreaming involves the following activities: obtaining gender-disaggregated data and qualitative information on the situation of men and women; conducting a gender analysis which highlights the differences between and among women, men, girls and boys in terms of their relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in a given context; and instituting gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including the establishment of indicators to gauge the extent to which gender equality objectives are met and changes in gender relations are achieved.

Parliaments should adopt one or more of the following mechanisms that are best suited to their own context:

- **A dedicated parliamentary committee on gender equality** entrusted with reviewing government policies, legislation and budgets from a gender perspective, where committee members question a broad range of groups and individuals, including public agencies, academics and private organisations, about their views on the effectiveness of government programmes and activities, and where strong links are forged between the committee and national women's groups, civil society organisations (CSOs), research institutes and universities.
- **Mainstreaming gender throughout all parliamentary committees**, so that all committee members – men and women – are mandated to address the gender implications of policy, legislative and budgetary matters under their consideration as appropriate, supported by parliamentary research staff with gender expertise.
- **A women's parliamentary caucus with a special remit for gender equality concerns**, composed of women (and men, if desired) working on a commonly agreed agenda. An effective caucus relies on strong links with national women's groups, CSOs and research institutes and universities.

Box 4.5. **IPU plan of action for gender-sensitive parliaments** *(continued)*

- **A speaker's reference group on gender equality composed of men and women parliamentarians** from across the political spectrum, which reports to the Speaker directly and sets the parliament's gender equality direction and agenda;
- **Technical research units on gender equality** or library/research staff with gender expertise who have access to up-to-date information, books, computers and online databases and who can assist with gender-based analyses.

Source: International Parliamentary Union (2012), *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments,* www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/action-gender-e.pdf.

Box 4.6. **The United States White House Council on Women and Girls**

In March 2009, President Obama signed an Executive Order creating the White House Council on Women and Girls. The Council continues the work of the post-Beijing Interagency Council and the White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach. It aims to provide "a co-ordinated federal response to the challenges confronted by women and girls" and to ensure "that all Cabinet and Cabinet-level agencies consider how their policies and programs respond to women and girls' needs and impact them."

The Council is located in the White House to provide a central point for co-ordination and co-operation of existing efforts and programmes for women and girls. It serves as a resource and forum for agencies, aiming to achieve a comprehensive federal government approach to policy on women and girls. The Council members are the heads of every federal agency and major White House office, reinforcing the statement of former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that in "our government, responsibility for the advancement of women is not the job of any one agency, it's the job of all of them." After analysing each federal agency's focus on women, the Council works to ensure that each agency is directly improving the economic status of women, as well as developing and evaluating policies that establish a balance between work and family. The Council has also focused on finding new ways to prevent violence against women through co-operation with the Vice President and the Justice Department's Office of Violence Against Women. In this endeavour, it has also worked towards building healthy families and improving women's health care.

The Council works across executive departments and agencies to provide a co-ordinated federal response to issues that have a distinct impact on the lives of women and girls, including assisting women-owned businesses to compete internationally and working to increase the participation of women in the science, engineering, and technology workforce, and to ensure that federal programs and policies adequately take those impacts into account. The Council is responsible for providing recommendations to the President on the effects of pending legislation and executive branch policy proposals; for suggesting changes to federal programs or policies to address issues of special importance to women and girls; for reviewing and recommending changes to policies that have a distinct impact on women in the federal workforce; and for assisting in the development of legislative and policy proposals of special importance to women and girls. The functions of the Council are advisory only. The Council includes not only federal agencies, but also various offices of the White House, which are working together to advance the work of the Council and to support the Administration's work on women and girls.

Box 4.6. **The United States White House Council on Women and Girls** *(continued)*

The Council is chaired by the Senior Adviser and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison. Council members include the Secretaries of State, Treasury, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services and Education; the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers; and others. The Council convenes regularly and conducts outreach to representatives of non-profit organisations, state and local government agencies, elected officials and other stakeholders.

Source: The White House website on the Council on Women and Girls, www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cwg.

Box 4.7. **Parliamentary committees in OECD member countries that address gender equality and women's empowerment**

The **Canadian** Parliament (House of Commons) created a Standing Committee on the Status of Women in 2004. It is composed of parliamentarians from all political parties and includes a chair, two vice chairs and eight members who study, evaluate and report on matters and bills relating to the status of women. The committee has prepared several studies, reports and government responses to concerns related to maternal and child health, violence against women, the participation of women in politics and non-traditional occupations, gender mainstreaming and pay equity.

The **Norwegian** Parliament (*Storting*) includes a Standing Committee on Family and Cultural Affairs that deals with policies and laws related to families, gender equality, children and youth, consumer affairs and cultural affairs. It corresponds to the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Children and Equality, and comprises 13 members. During its proceedings, the committee can convene hearings to obtain information from ministry representatives, organisations or individuals. Reciprocally, organisations and individuals can request to appear before the committee to present their insights. The committee submits recommendations and proposes decisions on relevant affairs to the Parliament, which is responsible for taking the final decisions, but usually follows the recommendations of the committee.

The National Council in **Austria** (*Nationalrat*) elects expert Committees at the beginning of each legislative period for all major domains, among which are the Committee on Gender Equality and the Committee on Family Affairs. The Committee on Gender Equality deals with all bills and legislative proposals related to gender equality, including women's and men's empowerment and the prevention of gender discrimination in all policy areas. The rationale behind these committees is that a preliminary deliberation of any subject must take place within a committee before the council decides upon it. This guarantees that members of the National Council can examine key issues in a restricted context while calling on external experts to advise them.

Parliamentarian Committees in **Germany** – "bodies responsible for preparing the decisions of the Parliament (*Bundestag*)" – are formed following a decision of the *Bundestag* for the duration of the electoral term. They represent forums in which members focus on a single, specific area of policy, and deliberate and revise all bills relating to this area. They then give a recommendation, which is voted upon in the plenary of the *Bundestag*. These committees are comprised of members of the different parliamentarian groups and collect information for their

Box 4.7. **Parliamentary committees in OECD member countries that address gender equality and women's empowerment** *((continued)*

work from the government, as well as external experts. Each committee has a chair, deputy chair and spokesperson; the size of membership differs according to the issue examined. Each member of the committee has one vote when decisions are taken. Overall, there is a dedicated Permanent Committee for each Ministry, which can also set up sub-committees for specific topics. In its 17th electoral term, the *Bundestag* set up 22 Permanent Committees, including the Committee on Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. It shares its opinion on all bills, motions, reports, resolutions and European Union issues that concern families, senior citizens, women and youth. It focuses on support for children and families, measures to help parents balance their work and family lives, promoting equal treatment of men and women, helping senior citizens to lead independent lives and involving youth in communities.

Source: Canada's House of Commons Committees website, Norwegian Parliament website, page on Standing Committee on Family and Cultural Affairs, Norwegian Parliament website, page on Standing Committees, Austrian Parliament's website, page on National Council Committees, German Parliament's website, page on the Committee on Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Gender equality commissions often work directly with other government agencies to consider gender related complaints, and undertake legislative initiatives, gender equality monitoring and litigation. Advisory and consultative councils, particularly widespread in Latin America, also are useful in maintaining relationships between national gender institutions and civil society actors and women's organisations; such councils can exert "soft" pressure on governments to help hold them accountable for gender equality commitments.

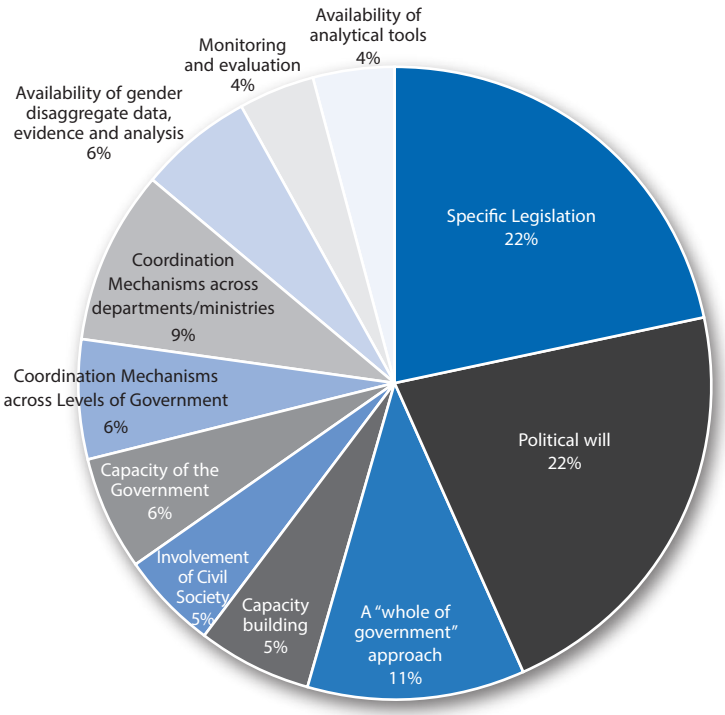
Oversight and accountability mechanisms are critical to the gender equality agenda. Without oversight and accountability mechanisms with adequate authority, gender equality work can stall once mechanisms are established and may fade from the legislative agenda. The presence of sound accountability and oversight that involves reporting to the highest possible level of government maximises the opportunity for gender mainstreaming initiatives to be successful and sustainable, and for gender equality to remain a legislative priority.

Policy co-ordination, implementation and a whole-of-government approach

The ability to advance gender equality objectives on a whole-of-government basis has been identified by OECD member countries as one of the major success factors in gender-sensitive policy making and gender mainstreaming (see Figure 4.7). This requires sound policy co-ordination (vertical and horizontal) and collaboration mechanisms, which are also noted as important enablers for gender mainstreaming. Conversely, an inability to achieve a whole-of-government approach was cited among the top barriers to achieving gender equality by about one-quarter of respondents to the *OECD Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership*.

Indeed, the capacity to co-ordinate the work of gender institutions, particularly among different national mechanisms, is another important indicator of their effectiveness. The absence of a co-ordinated approach in dealing with gender equality issues is often one of the major obstacles to the development and implementation of gender policies. Gender institutions must co-ordinate multiple elements (focal points, advisory councils, gender

Figure 4.7. **Major success factors in gender mainstreaming (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

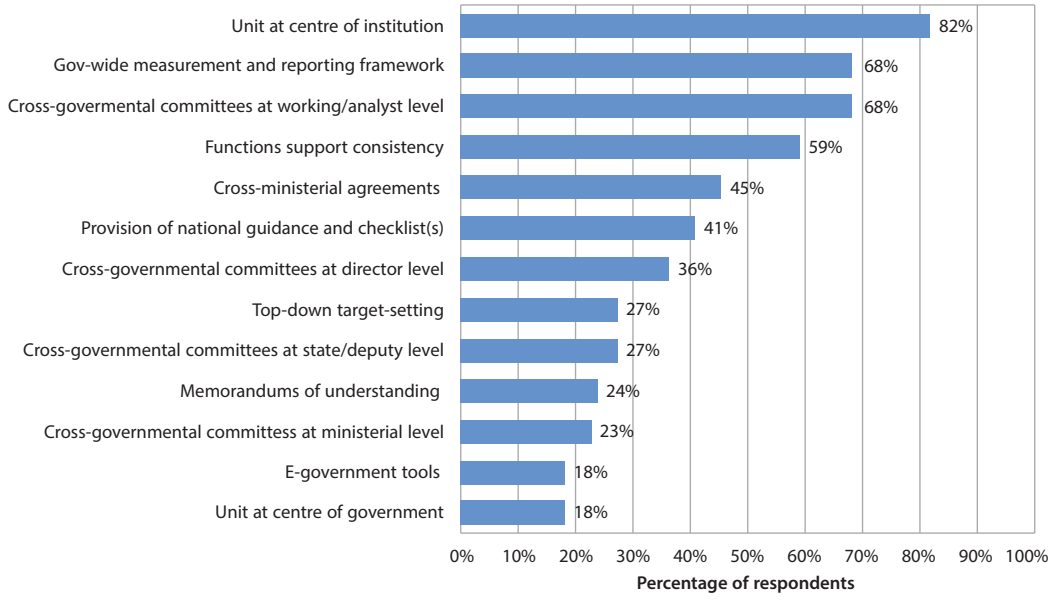
ombuds, committees and working groups), while maintaining effective collaborations with stakeholder groups in civil society and also co-ordinating gender mainstreaming processes across ministries/departments/sectors. In the case of Spain, for example, the gender institution's co-ordination function involves 20 distinct institutional components (Johan, 2010).

International experience shows that formalised co-ordination and central oversight mechanisms are essential to keep gender reforms moving forward, and to ensure that individual initiatives are aligned with the broader gender equality vision and strategies. Overall, at the horizontal level, in OECD countries, the most prevalent co-ordination mechanisms include establishing co-ordination units at the centre of government (82%), developing whole-of-government frameworks for gender equality (68%) and inter-ministerial groups convened by the central gender institution (68%) (see Figure 4.8). Emphasis is also placed on co-ordination at the analyst levels, demonstrating a practical approach to co-ordination in the area of gender policies. The least emphasis is placed on the use of e-government tools, although the growing demand for such tools is starting to take hold across OECD countries.

Some examples of such inter-ministerial or sectoral committees to address co-ordination issues come from Russia, Belgium (see Box 4.8) and South Africa (see Box 4.9). In 2006, the Russian Federation established the Inter-Agency Commission for Equality between Women and Men, composed of representatives of federal and regional governments, civil society and academia. Its mandate focuses on co-ordination efforts to improve the legislation for equal rights and opportunities, gender examination of legislative and normative acts, and integration of gender approaches (gender mainstreaming) at the

executive level (Abdurazakova, 2010). In some cases, horizontal inter-departmental bodies enjoy a legal status in equality acts or regulation, but such co-ordination mechanisms can still suffer from ambiguous mandates (Johan, 2010). Focal points within sectoral/line ministries charged with integrating and co-ordinating gender mainstreaming initiatives, for example, may face institutional marginalisation, a lack of authority and insufficient technical expertise (Ibid).

Figure 4.8. **Co-ordination mechanisms for gender equality initiatives (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Box 4.8. **Belgium's Federal Government Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Group**

In 2007, the Belgian Parliament adopted a Law concerning the Monitoring of the Application of the Resolutions from the Fourth World Conference on Women and Mainstreaming Gender into all federal policies. To support the implementation of this "whole-of-government" process, the law created an Inter-departmental Co-ordination Group for the federal government. This group's members are representatives of administrations and ministers' offices and its secretariat is the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. The Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Group assumes responsibility for: promoting co-operation between ministries; adopting a federal plan of action; preparing an intermediary report and a final report at the end of the term; and exchanging good practices and promoting instruments useful to enforcing the law. The representatives of the ministries participating in the co-ordination group are also appointed as gender focal points in their respective entities. They receive compulsory training on gender mainstreaming and are tasked with ensuring follow-up on the diverse measures foreseen by the law (e.g, gender statistics, gender-responsive budgeting and the "gender test").

Source: Information provided by the Belgian Institute for Equality of Women and Men.

Box 4.9. South Africa's National Council Against Gender-Based Violence

The National Council Against Gender-Based Violence is a South African high-level multi-sectoral national response to gender-based violence that was launched in 2012. The Council advises, monitors, reports and co-ordinates national and international partnerships and is responsible for implementing its 365-day National Action Plan Against Gender-Based Violence. A dedicated Secretariat is employed and supported by an Executive Council (EXCO).

The EXCO has been formed, and is tasked with providing strategic guidance for the Council and securing financial resources to fund the work of the Council. The Council co-ordinates with several national departments (e.g. Correctional Services, Traditional Affairs) across nine provinces in South Africa and almost a dozen civil society sectors (e.g. Organised Labour). The aim is to "integrate, strengthen and mobilise structures of societies" to eliminate gender-based violence. In this way, the Council harmonises strategies of relevant organisations and provides for transfer of information and a sharing of resources.

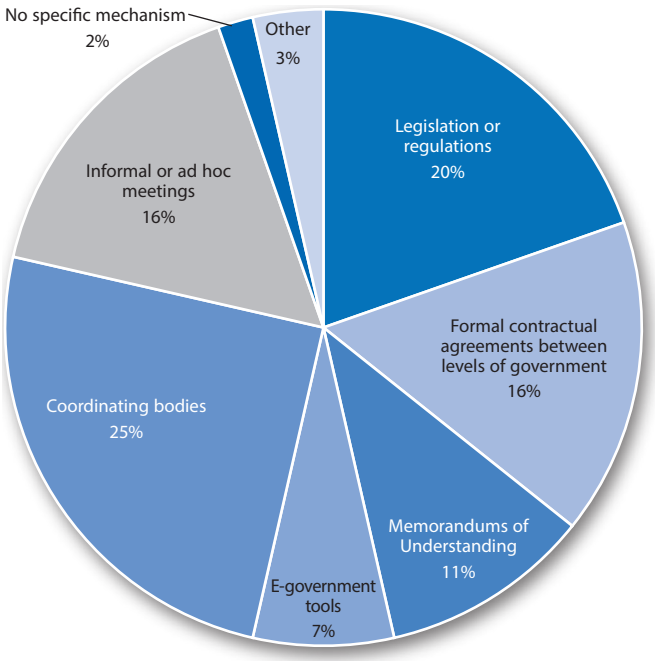
A regular plenary is scheduled four times per year, focusing on leadership and strategy for the Council. Additionally, there are extended plenary meetings twice per year with the mandate of nurturing political leadership. The CEO oversees the technical task teams for programmes (i.e. policy and legislation, research, prevention), monitoring and evaluation, administration, communication and resource mobilisation teams. The Council draws on diverse expertise, with representatives coming from various sectors – NGOs, government officials, religious organisations and academic communities.

Source: Website of the Government of South Africa.

A whole-of-government approach to gender equality allows national gender institutions to concentrate on fulfilling their catalytic role and can assist with collaboration challenges. Denmark assigns explicit responsibility for gender equality to 19 ministers with the Minister for Gender Equality responsible for co-ordinating and implementing the national gender strategy. New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs identifies a limited number of priority areas in its action plans that the Ministry then leads and co-ordinates while other government agencies undertake implementation. This approach allows the Ministry to function primarily as a policy agency rather than engaging in service delivery or advocacy. Belgium's federal Inter-Departmental Coordination Group supports a whole-of-government approach by bringing together representatives from across ministries who also serve as gender focal points in their respective entities. A whole-of-government approach is also in place in Australia. Yet, while this type of approach can certainly yield significant gains, the potential for a diminished role for the central gender institution exists. Another concern is that this approach could dilute attention away from the core objective of correcting imbalances in the status, resources and power between women and men (Tavares da Silva, 2010).

In addition, as shown on Figure 4.9, all countries with sub-national governments employ vertical co-ordination methods, such as co-ordinating bodies or committees (Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Greece, Slovak Republic, Belgium, Spain, Norway, Germany, Sweden, Israel, Chile, France, Korea and Canada), legislation or regulations (Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Greece, the Slovak Republic, Belgium, Spain, Norway, Germany, Sweden, Israel, Chile, France and Korea), memoranda of understanding (Mexico, Austria, Spain, Chile, Korea and Canada) or informal meetings between levels of government (Australia, New

Figure 4.9. **Tools for vertical co-ordination of gender equality initiatives (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Zealand, Finland, Sweden, France, Chile, Korea and Canada). In the case of Canada, cabinet ministers charged with gender equality at the national and provincial/territorial levels of government meet regularly to discuss portfolios of joint concern, as do civil servants at both levels of government who have responsibility for gender mainstreaming activities.

Designing policy co-ordination mechanisms that can facilitate a whole-of-government approach to gender equality both vertically and horizontally represents a continuing challenge for many governments. The complexity of the gender equality portfolio which requires participation across and between levels of government, makes co-ordination particularly demanding. The OECD governance and gender equality reviews confirm, however, that a whole-of-government approach remains the most effective co-ordination strategy for achieving gender equal societies.

Implementation

Gender equality policies, as all policies and programmes, are only as good as their implementation. Effective implementation requires a host of "hard" and "soft" levers to ensure that gender equality strategies and policies are implemented by all ministries at all levels of government. There are some mechanisms for implementation within OECD countries. For example, 86% of OECD countries have a regular measurement of performance either "always" (for example, in Mexico, Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Israel, Chile, Korea and Canada) or "sometimes" (the Czech Republic, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Switzerland, Greece, the Slovak Republic, Germany and France) while 81% reported using evaluation and monitoring requirements (for example, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Mexico, Switzerland, Greece, Spain, France and Canada "always"; and New Zealand,

Austria, Finland, Ireland, Slovak Republic, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Sweden and Chile "sometimes"). A good majority of countries also have regular reporting requirements to parliament (for example, Mexico, Austria, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Norway, Israel, France, Switzerland, Korea, Canada and the United States "always"; and Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Ireland, Greece, Belgium and Sweden "sometimes") or to a high-level commission (e.g. Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Israel, Korea, Luxembourg and Mexico), which can also facilitate effective co-ordination (see Figure 4.10).

Yet only a few countries integrate gender equality requirements into managers' performance and accountability agreements (see Figure 4.10). Audits or inspections, including by external institutions, are rare. As noted, limited accountability mechanisms combined with a lack of awareness within the public service, have been identified as main barriers to advancing gender equality initiatives and mainstreaming by more than 40% of the countries responding to the survey. Strengthening implementation and accountability mechanisms, supported by a whole-of-government approach, could significantly advance the implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives to support the full empowerment of women for countries' competitiveness and growth.

Opportunities and challenges

Despite ongoing challenges related to location, authority and resources, oversight and accountability, and co-ordination, national gender institutions continue to make significant contributions to gender equality, supporting countries' economic and social performance. A recent global synthesis report on national gender institutions concludes that legal reforms appear to be a major area of achievement for these mechanisms. Employment reforms, legislation to combat violence against women and equality and non-discrimination laws are examples of concrete results facilitated through the work of national gender institutions (Johan, 2010). In the MENA region, for example, the gender institutions in Egypt lobbied Parliament to change nationality laws, pension laws, the tax exemption law, the alimony fund law and family law. In Jordan, the legal age of marriage was raised through legal reforms supported by the national gender institutions (Ibid.). National gender institutions have also been pivotal in raising awareness of gender discrimination and stereotyping, for example, throughout South-Eastern Europe and CIS states by organising media campaigns (ibid).

In Europe and Latin America, national gender institutions have been instrumental in the creation of regional structures such as the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, which serves as an innovative tool for collaboration between government and civil society to assess successes and challenges in achieving gender equality and increasing regional empirical data.[9] The formation of gender observatories reinforces the importance of gender institutions in building strategic partnerships with civil society groups to foster co-ordinated action, as well as building a broader base of support for national mechanisms – support that can prove vital if government priorities drift away from gender concerns. Greece's National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013 included plans for the establishment of a national observatory on combatting violence against women.

The key to ensuring the success of gender institutions is to avoid frequent institutional restructuring, including relocations across ministries. Frequent changes may divert scarce resources from delivering the institutional mandate and result in staff fatigue, demotivation and high turnover. The increasing trend to combine gender equality mandates with others, often in view of fiscal consolidation efforts, may divert attention from prioritising women's equality needs.

Figure 4.10. **Mechanisms used by national ministries to ensure the implementation of gender equality legislation and initiatives (2012)**

	Regular measurement of performance	Audits or inspections, including by external audit institutions	Setting clear objectives with timelines to achieve them	Reporting to a high level steering body/ commission	Regular reporting requirements to parliament	Integration into managers' performance accords	Regular reviews at key stages of the implementation process	Integration of gender equality requirements in job descriptions	Evaluation and monitoring requirements
Australia	○	○	○	○	○	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Austria	●	⊗	●	⊗	●	⊗	○	○	○
Belgium	⊗	⊗	○	⊗	○	⊗	○	⊗	○
Canada	●	○	●	●	●	○	●	○	●
Chile	●	○	●	●	⊗	⊗	○	⊗	○
Czech Republic	○	⊗	●	●	⊗	⊗	●	○	●
Finland	●	⊗	●	●	○	⊗	○	○	○
France	○	○	●	●	●	⊗	⊗	○	●
Germany	○	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	○
Greece	○	⊗	○	○	○	⊗	○	○	●
Ireland	○	⊗	○	○	○	⊗	○	⊗	○
Israel	●	⊗	○	●	●	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Korea	●	⊗	⊗	●	●	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Luxembourg	⊗	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	●
Mexico	●	○	●	●	●	○	●	○	●
New Zealand	○	⊗	○	⊗	○	○	○	○	○
Norway	●	○	○	⊗	●	⊗	○	⊗	○
Slovak Republic	○	⊗	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	⊗	⊗	○
Spain	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	●	⊗	⊗	○	●
Sweden	●	●	⊗	⊗	○	⊗	○	○	○
Switzerland	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	●
United States	○	○	●	○	●	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Total OECD									
● Always	10	1	9	9	10	0	5	0	8
○ In some cases	9	8	8	5	8	4	9	11	10
⊗ No, this mechanism has not been established	3	13	5	8	4	18	8	11	4

Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Evidence-based and gender-sensitive policy making

The OECD *Government at a Glance 2013* report defines open and inclusive policy making as transparent, evidence-driven, accessible and responsive to as wide a range of citizens as possible. Inclusive policy making enhances transparency and public participation, while enabling governments to improve their policy performance, support economic recovery, restore the social contract and strengthen trust in institutions by considering impacts on various stakeholders and working with citizens, civil society and businesses to design better policies for better lives. Indeed, inclusive policies require integrating concerns of both men and women at all stages of the policy process and across all policy sectors, through the process called gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming was endorsed by 160 governments as part of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, which emphasises the responsibility of all government agencies to appropriately address issues of gender inequality. Section 204(a) of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action states that governments must "seek to ensure that before policy decisions are taken, an analysis of their impact on women and men, respectively, is carried out." This recommendation provided a foundation for the adoption of gender mainstreaming as an approach to embedding gender considerations in national laws, policies and programmes – and emphasising the responsibility of all government agencies to address issues of gender inequality.

Box 4.10. **Examples of regulations potentially having a greater impact on women than men**

A workplace regulation that permits parents to take leave to care for a sick child may apply equally to both genders, but is more likely to apply to women as primary caregivers. Regulations can also impede the ability of women to become fuller participants in society by making it more difficult for them to find employment, gain an education, start a business, meet the needs of their family, ensure their human rights, etc. Policies and regulations affecting women's roles may include:

- Education: access, educational materials;
- Health and health issues: family healthcare access, gender-specific concerns;
- Workplace issues: access to employment, gender in the workplace, access to training, equality of pay, forced labour/trafficking;
- Family issues: rights of women as wives and mothers, divorce, violence, inheritance, children;
- Public sphere: limitations on appearance, behaviour, or presence of women outside the home, access to courts of law, political participation, civil society participation.
- In addition, women and men may also experience the impacts of climate change, ageing, alcoholism, criminal activity, global economic governance and other policy issues differently. Hence, policy responses would need to take into account these differences.

Source: Bremer, J. (2009), *Position Paper: Introducing Gender Analysis into Regulatory Frameworks*, prepared for the first meeting of the Gender Focus Group of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme on Addressing Gender in Public Management; Decuyper, J. (2009), *Gender Sensitive Regulations, Belgium*, paper presented at the MENA-OECD Gender in Public Management conference, whv.org.au/publications-resources/gender-impact-assessments.

Gender mainstreaming developed in response to evidence that policies and programmes generally have a differential impact on women and men because men and women tend to have different responsibilities, needs and resources (see Box 4.10). Two additional elements are usually included in definitions of gender mainstreaming: the institutionalisation of gender concerns in order to transform "attitudes, culture, goals, and procedures," and gender empowerment, which is aimed at "promoting women's participation in decision-making processes, as well as having their voices heard and the power to put issues on the agenda."[10] Gender mainstreaming embraces the principle that equal services must be available to citizens and, in fact, that meeting the service needs of all men and women must be a core objective of gender equality strategies. By ensuring that institutions, policies and programmes respond to women and men equitably, gender mainstreaming also contributes to good governance. If the needs and priorities of women and men are considered at each phase of the policy cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation), achieving substantive progress on addressing remaining gender gaps is much more likely.

Implementing gender mainstreaming

While gender equality is both enshrined in many national constitutions (among them India, Russia, Germany, Poland, Spain, South Africa, Egypt and Canada) and evident in the international commitments made by many countries, gender equality gaps persist in domestic laws and policies. As such, applying gender mainstreaming to both the existing and new laws and regulations is of critical importance to close these gaps. Gender mainstreaming is a potentially revolutionary concept which promises to change the way that "mainstream" policies are formulated, decided on, implemented and evaluated. However, if gender mainstreaming is an extraordinarily promising principle, it is also an extraordinarily demanding one requiring international organisations and state governments to alter their policy-making procedures in fundamental ways (Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002, p. 288).

The application of gender mainstreaming to the policy-making process requires that it should be integrated from the initial stage of policy development and throughout the implementation and evaluation of policy impacts (see Box 4.11).

Box 4.11. **When to mainstream? – The policy process**

The major focus at the planning stage of any policy is:

- **Analysis of the current situation:** This involves identification of problems and challenges to be faced; examination of gender-disaggregated statistics; definition of the aims of the policy; are the aims of the policy the same for women and men, girls and boys? Who will be involved in the policy making? Are both genders involved in the policy making?
- **Decisions:** Once the gender-related information is collected and analysed, decisions need to be taken about problems and challenges for women and for men, girls and boys; these need to be addressed and prioritised (based on the initial planning stage).
- **Implementation:** Even though adopting gender mainstreaming from the initial stage of the policy planning process allows the policy to be gender-sensitive, there is no assurance that the policy will be "inequality free." There is a significant difference between analysing gender issues, supporting gender equality and actually implementing policies that promote

Box 4.11. **When to mainstream? – The policy process** *(continued)*

equality. This is considered the "applied" stage and, therefore, new or unidentified issues may still arise. For this reason, it is important that the actors involved in the development and delivery of the policy are supported and can promote equality.

- **Monitoring and evaluation**: Any implemented policy requires monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure that the aims and goals have been achieved, as well as to assess areas that need improvement. This monitoring should be a continuous process in order to assess the impact of the policy on women and men, girls and boys. Good governance involves considering, planning for and meeting the needs and priorities of all citizens. Adopting gender-responsive planning processes is an important step towards achieving this outcome and is the only way to ensure that government actions are likely to benefit women and men, girls and boys equally.

Sources: European Commission (n.d.), "A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment," Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission, Belgium, http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4376&langId=en.

All OECD countries are implementing some form of gender mainstreaming. Most countries (Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Switzerland, Finland, Ireland, Greece, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Norway, Chile, France, Korea, Canada and the United States) include a gender mainstreaming strategy within an overall gender equality strategy (see examples in Box 4.12). Others report pursuing gender mainstreaming as part of a separate strategy (Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Sweden and Israel). Gender mainstreaming approaches embrace the development of methodologies for incorporating gender perspectives into government legislation, regulations, policies and programmes. They are often focused on the adoption of a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach.

Box 4.12. **Examples of gender mainstreaming in OECD countries**

Sweden

Sweden adopted its first gender mainstreaming strategy in 1984, stating that all policy decisions were to be analysed on the basis of their implications for women and men. Since then, Sweden has consolidated its gender mainstreaming strategy, which aims at achieving equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, progressively into all policy areas.

Implementing gender mainstreaming in government offices in Sweden began with the Plan for Gender Mainstreaming at the Government Offices between 2004 and 2009. The initial phase included collection, analysis and dissemination of knowledge of, and experience with, gender mainstreaming. Training models for key groups within the government offices were developed and tested in 2008, and were intended to be incorporated into regular training courses given by the central government administration. In July 2008, the Swedish government also instructed the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg to further develop and disseminate methods and information on gender mainstreaming, and develop a forum to exchange experiences. The previous year, the Swedish government had mandated a committee of inquiry – the Gender Mainstreaming Support (*JämStöd*) – to provide

Box 4.12. **Examples of gender mainstreaming in OECD countries** *(continued)*

information about gender mainstreaming and develop practical methods and working models for mainstreaming gender into central government activities. It published reports such as the Gender Mainstreaming Manual and the Gender Equality in Public Services Report – A Book of Ideas for Managers and Strategists, and trained central government administrators on the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The committee also elaborated a working model outlining steps to be followed for an effective gender mainstreaming process.

To address gender concerns that require specific attention, Sweden adopted – in parallel with the gender mainstreaming efforts – a National Strategy to Promote Gender Equality in Sweden. The national gender equality strategy identified five focus areas to be addressed during the government's term of office: *i)* Representation – equal access to positions of power and influence; *ii)* Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value; *iii)* Violence committed by men against women, prostitution and trafficking of women for purposes of sexual exploitation; *iv)* Men and gender equality; and *v)* Sexualisation of the public sphere. Each minister in Sweden is responsible for fulfilling the gender equality goals in his or her specific policy area.

Source: Website of the Government Office of Sweden, gender mainstreaming page; Government Office of Sweden (2009), "Equal Power to Shape Society and One's Own Life: The Swedish Government's Gender Equality Policy"; Swedish Government Official Reports (2007), "Gender Mainstreaming Manual, a Book of Practical Methods from the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee"; Swedish Government Official Reports (2007), " Gender Equality in Public Services Report: Some Useful Advice on Gender Mainstreaming, A Book of Ideas for Managers and Strategists".

Korea

Since the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the Korean government has been making efforts to integrate gender perspectives into mainstream policy and programme development, otherwise known as gender mainstreaming. In the pursuit of gender equality, Korea has focused on developing women's capacities, increasing women's political representation and improving the welfare and civil rights of women. To ensure gender equality, Korea actively promoted gender-mainstreaming strategies in the policymaking process. In this context, a gender impact assessment was introduced in 2004. In 2011, Korea adopted the Gender Impact Assessment Act, which applies to all laws, decrees, and projects of the central and local governments. Existing guidelines have also been revised to ensure that the gender impact assessments are applied to new government activities. The assessment results must be incorporated in the following year's budgets which makes the coordination with gender-responsive budgeting crucial. To ensure that government resources are equitably allocated for men and women, the Korean government introduced gender-responsive budgeting in 2010, which was expanded to the local governments in 2013.

On a city level, the Seoul metropolitan government has sought to go beyond national provisions in policies related to women. There are three fundamental considerations of the city's women-friendly policies. They should: *i)* deal with the reality of a diverse range of urban women, *ii)* fully address women's daily needs, *iii)* have an impact throughout the city and influence gender mainstreaming in other policies. From 2006-10, Seoul introduced the Women Friendly City Project, which provided policies that reflect women's daily lives, and helped promote gender sensitivity in the use of city space and city planning. Based on five pillars, it had 90 projects ranging from improving childcare practices, to upgrading safety facilities. The Project was recognised as the best practice at the 2010 United Nations Public Service Award Ceremony.

Source: UN Habitat (2008), *Gender Mainstreaming in Local Authorities – Best Practices*, www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/member_publications/gender_mainstreaming_in_local_authorities.pdf (accessed 10/02/14).

Assessing the impact of gender mainstreaming

The diversity of gender mainstreaming approaches adopted worldwide over the past two decades make it difficult to make a general assessment of their effectiveness. Yet, most countries responding to the OECD survey rated their ability to integrate gender considerations into their policy-making processes rather highly. Similarly, a UN Expert Consultation on the Beijing Platform for Action highlighted the following achievements and found that gender mainstreaming contributed to:

- Greater public awareness of gender inequality and women's capabilities to overcome it;
- Significant strengthening of women's organisations with an important advocacy role;
- Entrenchment of national gender institutions within many governments;
- Increased resource allocations to social sectors that have improved the status of women;
- Legal reforms, as well as legal and policy frameworks for gender equality on a range of gender-related issues; and
- Improvements in the availability and use of gender-disaggregated data at the national and international levels (Moser, 2005).

Some of the main enablers cited by the countries in this area include: the development of methodologies for incorporating gender perspectives into government legislation, policies and programmes (76%); the adoption of a comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming (67%); the availability of gender-disaggregated data (48%) and the development of effective accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming across government ministries and agencies (43%).

The impact of gender mainstreaming can be seen across the spectrum of policy sectors, but perhaps nowhere as explicitly as in the changes to health policy that gender analysis has facilitated. In areas such as treatments for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer, gender analysis has been pivotal in improving women's health. Gender analysis has been critical to designing policies and programmes around HIV/AIDS, anti-smoking and suicide prevention. But the policy impact of gender analysis extends far beyond health issues. In Canada, for example, governments have integrated gender analysis into policy-making concerning immigration, divorce, education, pension reform, Aboriginal women and matrimonial property rights and anti-violence strategies. In Sweden, gender analysis revealed that youth centres were used 70% by boys and 30% by girls. This led to re-modelling activities and use of buildings (Boman, 2013).

These achievements aside, significant challenges remain. Redden summarises the ongoing debates over gender mainstreaming:[11]

- ***Non-integrated approaches to gender mainstreaming.*** Although there is general agreement that gender mainstreaming efforts are most successful when they form part of an integrated approach to gender equality, this is frequently not the case. Many countries responding to the OECD survey acknowledged lack of co-ordination as one of the key challenges in gender mainstreaming (see Figure 4.1).
- ***Policy evaporation.*** Policy intentions that are not realised in practice may "evaporate" for various reasons, including lack of available staff, issues with the organisational culture and/or a perceived lack of "ownership" of the policies in

question (Moser and Moser, 2005; Moser, 2005). Competing leadership priorities may present a problem at the implementation level.

- ***Insufficient resources.*** The lack of available resources – where "gender mainstreaming is currently required to do 'more with less'" (Sweetman, 2012, p. 396) – may significantly inhibit the implementation and maintenance of gender mainstreaming efforts. In many cases, the lack of resources for mainstreaming efforts can be a result of insufficient focus on gender equality within organisations. This challenge has been cited by about 30% of countries responding to the questionnaire.
- ***Evaluation and monitoring.*** The evaluation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming efforts have also been identified among key challenges by over 30% of countries, often because of a "lack of effective, consistent, and systematic monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming outcomes and impacts" (Moser and Moser, 2005, pp. 17-18), making it difficult to assess the impacts on those involved, and complicating efforts to link strategies with concrete outcomes. A lack of gender expertise by policy actors may compound the problem when their efforts are focused on attaining "minimum requirements" rather than "genuine gender equality" (Meier and Celis, 2011, p.473). Almost 40% of OECD country respondents identified lack of gender expertise as a barrier to successful gender mainstreaming. Measuring gender equality rather than women's empowerment is an important step in that direction (World Economic Forum, 2012; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013). Comprehensive approaches to gender-based inequalities will ensure that the decreasing gaps do not represent losses for men rather than gains for women (Gerecke, 2013) and that women's gains are part of joint development and inclusive growth.
- ***Organisational culture and resistance to gender mainstreaming efforts.*** Institutional or organisational culture is often cited as an ongoing impediment to successfully implementing gender mainstreaming. Organisational cultures that remain "male-biased" – where individualism and the separation of work and family are central aspects of an institutional culture – can be problematic in pursuing gender equality goals (Moser, 2005, p. 584). Resistance to gender mainstreaming efforts may arise if gender mainstreaming policies pose a challenge to existing structures and procedures. Similarly, 43% of countries cited a lack of awareness of gender mainstreaming in the public sector among the top barriers.
- ***Responsibility for gender mainstreaming.*** The diffusion of responsibility for gender mainstreaming efforts within organisations or governments may become problematic for two reasons. First, when gender mainstreaming is viewed as everyone's responsibility, it may fall off the policy agenda (Moser and Moser, 2005, p. 16). Second, gender mainstreaming often relies on the "commitment and skills of *key individuals"* and when these individuals are no longer present, gender mainstreaming efforts may ultimately suffer (Ibid, emphasis in original).
- ***Limited involvement of civil society.*** Given that gender mainstreaming often relies on government processes and technical knowledge rather than encouraging a more "participatory/democratic" approach, it may result in a limited involvement of civil society (Beveridge and Nott, 2002). As such, care is needed to avoid the marginalisation of civil society and provide sufficient opportunities for the involvement of external stakeholders at all stages of the policy process.
- ***Gender mainstreaming versus diversity or equality***[12] ***mainstreaming.*** Some concerns have been raised related to the limited focus of gender mainstreaming

in exclusively addressing gender-based inequality. The question is whether mainstreaming should be broadened to address a wider set of (potentially) overlapping or intersecting inequalities. Efforts have been made in both Canada and New Zealand to address broader diversity issues through gender based analysis (Bacchi, 2010, p. 27; Siltanen, 2006, p. 89-91). Because gender may not be the most pressing source of inequality in every situation, however, there have been calls to shift focus from "gender" to "diversity" mainstreaming, thus taking a wider approach to inequality (Siltanen 2006, p. 92[13]).

Gender-disaggregated evidence for better policies

Data and evidence supporting decision making are pivotal to enable governments to develop effective gender-sensitive and evidence-based policies and gender equality strategies for inclusive growth. High quality, readily accessible gender-disaggregated data supplies the foundation for both sound evidence-based policy making and gender monitoring and evaluation, and is integral to gender impact assessment. Conversely, the absence of differentiated data (Box 4.11) makes it very difficult to understand the impact of gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and efforts.

Effective evidence-driven policy requires ensuring that sector-specific policies be informed by gender-disaggregated data, given that policy decisions may impact the lives of women and men in different ways. Good quality gender-disaggregated data are required in all areas of public policy, along with a framework and structures for collecting data, linkages with a gender equality vision and strategy, and the capacity to undertake research and analysis within the government and outside.

Although the institutional context and framework in which individual national gender institutions pursue gender equality are distinctive, a common array of tools and practices for gender mainstreaming can be identified. These tools and practices generally encompass the collection of gender statistics and the development of gender-sensitive indicators, as well as gender impact assessments, including gender-responsive budgeting.

Collecting gender-disaggregated data

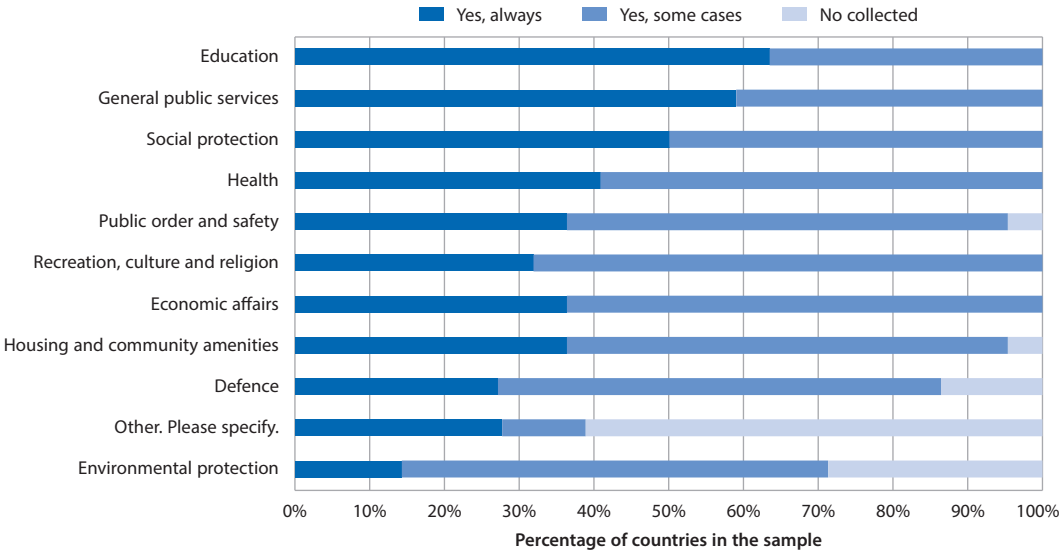
Underpinning any inclusive and gender-sensitive policy-making process is the systematic collection, monitoring and dissemination of readily accessible, reliable and relevant gender-disaggregated statistics. Such data is the basis of gender mainstreaming and efforts to monitor, measure and evaluate gender equality initiatives and their impact. To be comprehensive, gender-disaggregated data should be collected about many dimensions of inequality beyond gender, including ethnicity, caste, location, age, poverty, employment status and ability. Such collection requires diverse methods, including censuses, surveys, interviews, community-based monitoring systems, time-use surveys and measures of unpaid work. The regular collection of the gender-disaggregated data necessitates reliable data systems; creating and maintaining effective data collection and management systems, however, remains a challenge for many governments, which still need to improve and expand their data systems.

Most advanced OECD countries use government-wide measurement and reporting frameworks supported by the collection of gender-disaggregated data across most policy areas. While gaps still persist across certain policy sectors, the trend is to increase the availability of data disaggregated by gender to enable a sound assessment of the impacts of policies and laws on men and women (Figure 4.11). Line ministries in charge of specific

policy areas most often determine data needs with an important role played by gender institutions and statistical offices. There is significant progress globally in terms of the development of gender indicators and the collection and dissemination of gender statistics. Among EU countries, several national mechanisms (for example, in Finland, France, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal and Sweden) report close co-operation with national statistical offices and the regular gathering and publication of statistical profiles of women and men (Tavares da Silva, 2010). Sweden's Ordinance of Official Statistics stipulates that all official statistics concerning individuals or groups must be presented disaggregated by sex (Horsburgh, 2011).

Although information to measure empowerment of women and men is increasingly available in most countries, significant gap seem to remain in such areas as gender bias and gender-based discrimination, gender-based violence, opportunities to reconcile professional and private life and entrepreneurship. In fact, collecting statistics on violence against women remains in the early stages across many national contexts. Closing these gaps will be critical for developing a comprehensive knowledge base in these areas, which have a strong impact on achieving de facto gender equality.

Figure 4.11. **Collection of gender-disaggregated data across sectors (2012)**



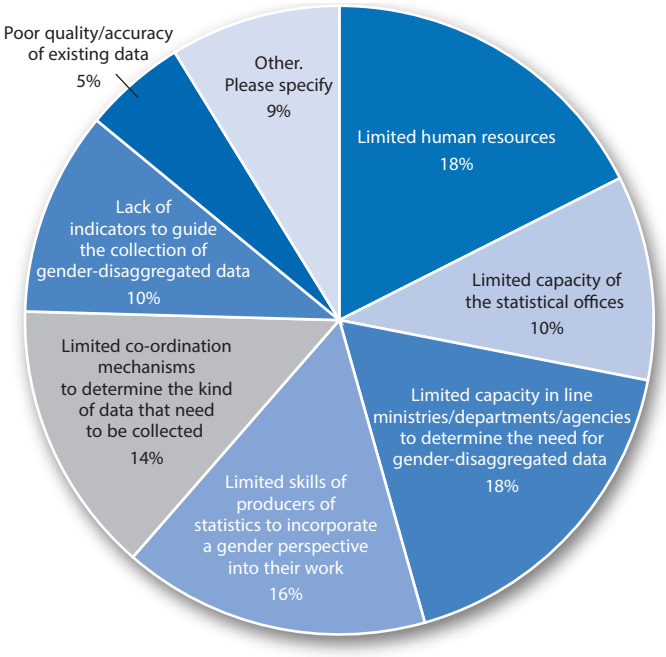
Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Limited capacities remain a core challenge in data collection

As noted, significant data gaps remain, primarily due to financial constraints, limited prioritisation by governments and a lack of capacity with respect to data collection and analysis. Indeed, some of the specific challenges in collecting gender-disaggregated data across OECD countries mainly relate to capacity challenges, including insufficient resources, varying capacity in ministries to define the need for gender-disaggregated data, limited capacities of statistical offices and uneven skills of statisticians to integrate gender perspectives into mainstream indicators and data collection efforts, as well as insufficient co-ordination mechanisms to define the needs for gender-related data (see Figure 4.12). As such, building public servants' awareness of gender issues through information campaigns and training, including statisticians and representatives of line ministries, may also support

the quality of the collected data and evidence used for policy decisions. In addition, central gender institutions may play a stronger role in working with ministries to define and co-ordinate their needs for gender-disaggregated data.

Figure 4.12. **Key challenges in gender-disaggregated data collection (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Box 4.13. **Gender mainstreaming in Israel: a case study of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour**

In 2011, an independent analysis of Israel's Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour exposed the difficulty in performing a gender analysis on the Ministry due to an absence of gender-disaggregated data, despite an amendment to the 2008 Statistics Law requiring that such information be collected.

The study revealed gaps with significant policy implications, specifically, a lack of gender-disaggregated data on:

- Investments in industrial enterprises;
- New employee statistics, making it impossible to track the effectiveness of initiatives designed to address employment problems of Arab women and ultra-Orthodox men, whom the Ministry has prioritised;
- Wage gaps and economic power;
- The integration of women into various technological fields;
- Violations of workers' rights; and
- Results of employment programmes for targeted populations including single parents, 45+ year-olds and Ethiopian Israelis.

Source : Adva Center (2004), *Gender Mainstreaming Calls for Gender Breakdowns*.

Other countries, such as Egypt, report ongoing statistical gaps in areas such as health, education and economic participation (Jad, 2010). Even when such data exist, some governments still need encouragement to employ gender statistics in their planning and budgetary processes. Consequently, national gender institutions must often engage in developing guidelines, manuals and training materials to promote the development and collection of gender-disaggregated statistics, as well as designing methodologies to encourage their application.

Gender equality indicators and measurement

The overall success of reforms most often depends on their coherence, sequencing and synergies with other reforms and links to a clear vision and strategy. Gender-sensitive indicators provide a useful tool to communicate goals and objectives within an overall vision and strategy for gender equality. They are used to assess progress in achieving gender equality by measuring changes in the status of women and men, and may be used to measure a particular intervention towards achieving greater gender equality.[14] Focusing on measuring what matters can help drive the achievement of results and monitor performance against the desired goals for gender equality. Gender-sensitive indicators can enhance accountability and aid in prioritising gender equality and making the case that gender issues should be taken seriously. Finally, they can enable better planning and actions by providing information for adjusting programmes and activities to increase their impact and by measuring gender mainstreaming within organisations.

An ongoing debate in the evaluation of gender mainstreaming and the creation of gender-sensitive indicators, however, has been how best to identify the appropriate indicators to measure complex issues (such as gender empowerment); these areas encompass both access to particular arenas like political decision making, but also refer to the meaning, motivation and sense of purpose and self-worth that an individual feels (Kabeer, 2005). Women's empowerment, therefore, cannot be measured by a single indicator and requires both quantitative and qualitative indicators (see Box 4.14) that can draw data from censuses, labour-force surveys, etc., as well as capture people's judgments and perceptions through focus groups, attitude surveys, interviews and participatory appraisals.

Box 4.14. **Designing qualitative and quantitative indicators for gender equity policy-making**

A study reviewing international approaches to measuring women's empowerment suggests considering six dimensions: economic, socio-cultural; familial-interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological. Each of these, in turn, is measured at different social levels: the household; the community; and "broader arenas" to accommodate contextual differences between countries.

In the economic dimension, indicators of empowerment include: women's and men's control over household income, their access to employment, credit and markets, and the representation of women's and men's interests in macro-economic policies. In the psychological dimension, indicators would include: self-esteem and psychological well-being; collective awareness of injustice; and a systemic acceptance of women's entitlement and inclusion.

Source: Malhotra et al. (2003), as quoted in Moser, A. (2007), *Gender and Indicators: Overview Report. BRIDGE Development Programme*, UN, p. 27.

Some commentators argue that evaluations tend to focus too heavily on "input indicators" such as "the number and proportion of female beneficiaries, and number of activities" instead of the actual outcomes of these efforts (Moser and Moser 2005, p. 18). True and Parisi (2013, p. 44) suggest it may be necessary to account for the different ways that gender equality is understood in various global contexts and to create "benchmark indicators" to evaluate mainstreaming efforts more effectively. Other analysts point to a lack of necessary attention to measuring the intangible aspects of gender mainstreaming outcomes such as "… the change in consciousness of women and men, the change in community norms, or the change in attitudes" that often are missed in gender-sensitive indicators (Rao and Kelleher 2005, p. 62[15]). Regardless of the approach, it is important to remember that "gender-sensitive measurements alone do not improve gender equality; rather, data must be collected, analysed, disseminated and used" (Moser, 2007, p. 3).

In addition, at the international level, in 2011 at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea, governments committed to redoubling their efforts to implement existing commitments to gender equality. The global monitoring framework of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation tracks progress on the implementation of commitments agreed at Busan. The OECD collaborated with UN Women on the design of a global gender equality indicator – one of only ten indicators to be included in the monitoring framework. The indicator provides data on whether

Box 4.15. **Promising plans for tracking gender budget allocations**

Several countries which currently lack gender equality tracking systems have reported on initiatives to move forward in this area:

- **Bangladesh** plans to generate gender-disaggregated data at all levels to integrate gender into planning at the central government level and to incorporate gender responsive budgeting into the medium-term budgetary framework.
- **Benin** and **Madagascar** have appointed gender focal points trained in gender responsive budgeting in all sector ministries.
- **Burkina Faso** is planning programmes to raise awareness among government officials on gender responsive budgeting.
- In **Honduras**, the National Women's Institute has proposed a gender budget classifier to track resources allocated to programmes, projects and activities that promote gender equality and for the inclusion of a Gender Equity Investment Index in the monitoring system of the country vision and national plan.
- **Malawi** wants to pilot programme-based budgeting, including the collection of sex-disaggregated data, to improve accountability for results.
- **Peru** has a monitoring system to track resources for gender equality in the public budget. This has not yet been implemented systematically due to limited capacity in budgetary monitoring institutions, however.
- Annual circulars from **Senegal**'s Ministry of Economy and Finance call for sector ministries to integrate gender analysis in their budgets. These are bearing fruit in the health sector, where maternity infrastructure will be integrated into all new health facilities at the district or rural level.

Source: UNDP-OECD (2014), "Making Development Co-operation More Effective: 2014 Progress Report," OECD Publishing, Paris.

governments track allocations for gender equality and how this information is made public. It is an entry point for ensuring that public expenditure is gender-responsive and benefits women and men equally.

Indicator 8: "Proportion of developing countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment."

There has been strong uptake and interest in this global indicator – even from countries without a system in place to track and make public resource allocations (See Box 4.15). Out of 36 countries that reported on the indicator, 12 have systems in place to track and make public allocations on gender equality (UNDP-OECD, 2014). Four additional countries have a tracking system but allocations are not made public. There is also scope for further progress: many of the countries without a system in place reported ongoing efforts to promote gender responsive budgeting and to develop mechanisms for tracking allocations in support of gender equality in a more systematic manner. The fact that many of these countries voluntarily reported on this indicator despite not having systems in place is a sign of their commitment to making progress on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Policy measures to advance gender-disaggregated data and measurement

Acknowledging the importance of gender-disaggregated data, and in recognition of identified gaps, OECD countries are taking active steps to build capacities for gender-disaggregated data and measurement (see Figure 4.13). Some of the key steps include introducing systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into national statistical systems and formal requirements for data disaggregation by gender, as well as the incorporation of a gender perspective within national statistical legislation. A number of countries report setting up a unit within a national statistical office (Australia, Belgium, Chile, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Norway, Spain, the Slovak Republic, Sweden and Switzerland), establishing co-ordination mechanisms to determine horizontal gender disaggregated needs (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Greece, Mexico, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the United Sates) and undertaking the systematic identification of gaps in knowledge related to gender equality (Belgium, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland and the United States). Only a few countries report providing guidelines or handbooks for the collection of gender-disaggregated data (Belgium, Finland, France and Sweden). In its most recent national action plan (2010), Hungary acknowledges shortcomings in its gender data collection, prioritising this as an important objective.[16]

In addition, national gender institutions can play a strong role in feeding gender-sensitive indicators into the policy process. In 2009 and 2010, New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs published *Indicators for Change: Tracking the Progress of New Zealand Women*, which provides a wealth of information on the social and economic status of women and gives policy makers valuable insights into where gender gaps persist.[17] In 2011, the White House Council on Women and Girls published a landmark set of social and economic well-being indicators grouped into five areas of interest – people, families and income, education, employment, health, and crime and violence – to compile a baseline on how women are faring in the United States and how these trends have changed over time (see Box 4.16[18]).

The establishment of common indicators at the EU level serves as an incentive for member countries and others to develop and use such measurement tools. In areas where data collection and measurement remains challenging, regional co-operation among the national mechanisms on gender indicators has been facilitated by collaborative projects such as the Gender Empowerment Measurements through Statistics Project (GEMS), which includes Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

Figure 4.13. **Measures undertaken by countries to improve the collection of gender-disaggregated data at the national level of government (2012)**

	Systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into national statistics systems	Introduction of formal requirements for gender disaggregation and the incorporation of a gender perspective within national statistical legislation	Systematic identification of gaps in knowledge related to gender equality	Development of a handbook to guide collection of gender-disaggregated data	Establishment of horizontal co-ordination mechanisms to determine gender-disaggregated data needs	Setting up a gender statistics unit within a national statistical office(s)
Australia	○	○	○	○	●	●
Austria	○	○	○	○	●	○
Belgium	●	●	●	●	●	●
Canada	●	○	●	○	○	○
Chile	●	●	●	○	●	●
Czech Republic	●	○	○	○	○	●
Finland	●	○	○	●	○	○
France	●	●	○	●	○	○
Germany*	●	●	○	○	○	○
Greece	○	○	●	○	●	○
Ireland	○	○	○	○	○	○
Israel	○	●	○	○	○	○
Korea	●	●	●	○	●	○
Luxembourg	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mexico	●	●	●	○	●	●
New Zealand	●	●	○	○	○	○
Norway	●	○	●	○	●	●
Slovak Republic	○	●	○	○	○	●
Spain	●	●	●	○	●	●
Sweden	●	●	●	●	○	●
Switzerland	○	○	●	○	●	●
United States	○	○	●	○	●	○
Total OECD						
● Priority	13	11	11	4	11	10
○ Not priority	9	11	11	18	11	12

Note: * In Germany, while there is no separate unit of work "gender statistics" , gender mainstreaming and gender equality, as cross-cutting issues, are the responsibility of all departments of the Statistical Office.

Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Box 4.16. Uses of gender-sensitive indicators in OECD countries

Norway

Since 2008, Statistics Norway has published national gender equality indicators, including:

- share of one- to five-year-olds in kindergarten, gender distribution in municipal council representatives, education;
- gender distribution in the workforce, distribution of income, gender distribution in part-time work, use of fathers' quotas;
- gender distribution in business structures, gender distribution in the public sector; gender distribution in the private sector, gender distribution among leaders, and gender distribution in educational programmes.

Results are published on a national scale and are also available by county and municipality to allow policy makers to address regional and local issues.

New Zealand

In 2009, New Zealand published *Indicators for change: Tracking the progress of New Zealand Women*. The indicators drew from the Household Labour Force Survey, the Time Use Survey and the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwelling to measure a range of outcomes related to three goals:

- **Women's opportunities to develop and use their skills and talents.** Indicators for this goal included educational attainment, participation in tertiary education, participation in modern apprenticeships, median hourly earnings, weekly income, representation of women in leadership and joblessness.
- **Women's health, empowerment, resilience and safety.** Indicators for this goal included criminal victimisation, concern about crime, health expectancy, self-reported health status and access to health services.
- **Society's recognition of caring as integral to economic and social success.** Indicators for this goal included satisfaction with work-life balance, total work time and access to early childhood education.

Source: Statistics Norway, www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/likekkom; Ministry of Women's Affairs of New Zealand (2009), "Indicators for change: Tracking the progress of New Zealand Women," available at mwa.govt.nz/sites/public_files/indicators-for-change-2009.pdf.

Gender impact assessments

Open and inclusive policy making is transparent, evidence-driven, accessible and responsive to as wide a range of citizens as possible. It strives to include a diverse number of voices and views in the policy-making process. While inclusive policy making enhances transparency, accountability and public participation and builds civic capacity, it also offers a way for governments to improve their policy performance by working with citizens, civil society organisations, businesses and other stakeholders to deliver concrete improvements in policy outcomes and the quality of public services.

Gender impact assessments (GIAs)[19] are one tool for gender mainstreaming that policy makers can use to assess the impact that new legislation or policies may have on women

and men, according to gender-relevant criteria. Building awareness and understanding among policy makers of the potentially different effects of policy choices on men and women is key to inclusive policy making in various domains. Nevertheless, even seemingly gender-neutral policy decisions can have effects, whether intentional or not, on women's chances of becoming equal participants in society. They may make it more difficult for them to find employment, secure an education, start a business, meet the needs of their family or ensure their human rights.

GIAs, also known as "gender audits" (and in Canada as gender-based analysis), offer a methodology for systematically analysing the differential effects of policies, legislation regulations and institutional or individual practices on women and men. GIAs can be employed regularly to systematically ensure the adoption of gender-sensitive, efficient and effective policy options. The EU defines GIA as "a process to compare and assess, according to gender-relevant criteria, the current situation and trend with the expected development resulting from the introduction of the proposed policy" (European Commission, n.d.). They are a variation of the more comprehensive regulatory impact assessment (RIA), which encompasses a range of methods aimed at systematically assessing the negative and positive impacts of proposed and existing regulations.

GIAs are applicable to each stage of the policy cycle. They can be conducted *ex ante* (before the proposed law or policy has been approved or gone into effect) and *ex post* (following implementation and during the impact evaluation, to assess whether the intended outcomes were achieved). Indeed, the EU experience shows that GIA should occur at an early stage in the policy-making process so that the policy, regulation or legislation can be adapted or re-oriented. This is especially true in case of negative effects and can help decision makers choose between:

- alternative scenarios (derived from differing estimates of the gender outcomes of the actions to be launched);
- alternative programmes and projects; and
- alternative methodologies for carrying out the same programme or project (European Commission, n.d.).

According to the *OECD Survey on Gender Public Policies and Leadership*, *ex ante* evaluations are more commonplace. Of the responding countries, 84% (16 countries) reported having requirements for *ex ante* GIAs on primary legislation, compared to 37% (7 countries) for *ex post*. In general, however, it seems GIAs are not yet routine elements of policy making; the majority of responding countries reserve GIAs for primary and secondary legislation rather than for policies and programmes (see Figure 4.14). Box 4.17 contains the EU criteria for GIA, which take into account both the differences between men and women, as well as the need for restorative action to ensure that any previous gender-based inequalities are addressed, while Box 4.18 provides information on gender impact reports in Sweden and Ireland.

The goal of a GIA is to promote gender equality by fully analysing the policy consequences for women and men to ensure valid comparison and conclusions can be drawn (Horsburgh, 2011, p. 12). GIAs are conducted extensively in the development sector and used by aid agencies, government aid departments and international NGOs to better understand the correlation between poverty and gender equality. Increasingly, governments utilise GIAs across a range of sectors (health, labour, finance, etc.) to address the gendered nature of policies, programmes and practices and minimise any differential impacts on women and men.

Figure 4.14. **Requirements for gender impact assessments at the central/federal level of government (2012)**

	Requirements for ministries/departments/ agencies to conduct gender impact assessments (ex ante)			Requirements for ministries/departments/ agencies to conduct gender impact assessments (ex post)			Requirement to undertake gender-responsive budgeting at
	Primary legislation	Subordinate regulation	Government programmes and initiatives	Primary legislation	Subordinate regulation	Government programmes and initiatives	The central level
Australia	⊘	⊘	⊙	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Belgium	❍	❍	⊙	❍	❍	❍	●
Chile	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊘	⊘	⊘	❍
Czech Republic	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊘
Finland	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	●
France	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	●
Germany	●	●	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Greece	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	❍
Ireland	⊙	⊘	⊙	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Israel	●	●	⊘	⊙	⊙	⊙	●
Korea	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Luxembourg	●	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Mexico	⊙	⊘	⊙	⊘	❍	⊙	●
New Zealand	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Norway	●	⊘	⊙	●	●	⊙	●
Slovak Republic	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Spain	●	●	⊙	⊘	⊘	⊘	●
Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Switzerland	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊙
Total OECD							
● Yes, always	10	6	3	3	3	2	9
⊙ Yes, sometimes	6	5	11	4	4	6	1
❍ No, but planned	2	2	1	2	3	2	2
⊘ No, not planned	1	6	4	10	9	9	7

Source: OECD (2013a), *Government at a Glance 2013*, based on the OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Box 4.17. **EU criteria for gender impact assessment**

The European Commission's report on Gender Impact Assessment states the following criteria:

a) Differences between women and men in the policy field, such as:

- **participation** (sex-composition of the target/population group(s), representation of women and men in decision-making positions);
- **resources** (distribution of crucial resources such as time, space, information and money, political and economic power, education and training, job and professional career, new technologies, health care services, housing, means of transport, leisure);
- **norms and values** which influence gender roles, gender division of labour, the attitudes and behaviour of women and men respectively, and inequalities in the value attached to men and women or to masculine and feminine characteristics;
- **rights** pertaining to direct or indirect sex discrimination, human rights (including freedom from sexual violence and degradation), and access to justice in the legal, political or socio-economic environment; and

b) **How can policies, laws and regulations** contribute to the elimination of existing inequalities and promote equality between women and men in participation rates, the distribution of resources, benefits, tasks and responsibilities in private and public life, and in the value and attention accorded to masculine and feminine characteristics, behaviour and priorities?

Key questions for policy makers on gender-sensitive regulations:

"Has a commitment to gender been incorporated at a high level into the regulatory reform, or is it an add-on (or absent from the agenda altogether)?

- Does the review process examine whether regulations have differential impacts on men and women and determine whether corrective measures are needed?
- Are there opportunities for women to participate directly or indirectly through civil society groups and is there monitoring of actual participation?
- Are there barriers to entry for women-owned firms overall or in government procurement?
- Are there administrative requirements that, in addition to posing barriers to entrepreneurs generally, are especially cumbersome for women or are there areas where women's property or other rights are deficient in ways that impede business development?
- Do women face particular barriers in gaining access to credit or employment? Are there barriers to women's access to training, advisory services, or other activities that would strengthen their economic participation as employers and employees?

Are these and other gender linkages identified and are policy-makers encouraged to take them into consideration actively in forming policy?"

Sources: European Commission (n.d.), "A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment," Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission, Belgium, http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4376&langId=en; Bremer, J. (2009), *Position Paper: Introducing Gender Analysis into Regulatory Frameworks*, American University in Cairo, prepared for the first meeting of the Gender Focus Group of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme on "Addressing Gender in Public Management", www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/50/43088074.pdf.

Box 4.18. **Gender impact assessments in OECD countries**

The **Swedish** government has issued a binding regulation stipulating that all Committees of Enquiry must conduct a gender impact analysis for policy proposals potentially affecting gender equality. Committees of Enquiry are appointed by the Swedish government for policy proposals requiring extensive analysis and preparation before submission to Parliament. To support the work of the Committees of Enquiry, a handbook has been produced with guidelines for gender impact analysis. These guidelines stipulate that, if a policy proposal has gender relevance, its anticipated impact needs to be indicated in a report. Circumstances and conditions for both genders must be made visible, and both the impact and likely outcomes for each gender need to be listed and analysed.

The first step in an impact assessment is to determine whether gender is relevant to the enquiry. The second step is to determine the criteria for the gender impact assessment:

- Participation: What is the gender distribution of the groups covered or affected by the enquiry?
- Resources: What is the breakdown between the genders in terms of time, space, information, money, political and economic power, education, careers, new technologies, health care, housing, transportation, recreation?
- Norms and values: What norms, values and quality measures control an activity? Who sets the standards and values?

The third step is to integrate the gender dimension in the enquiry: Is there any direct or indirect influence on the conditions of each gender in this field? Are there any gender equality gaps in this field? How can barriers to equality be eliminated in this field? What are the implications for gender equality regarding the structural and organisational changes proposed?

The fourth step is to fully reflect the gender dimension in the enquiry: What gender differences exist? Are statistics disaggregated by gender? How is the gender dimension included in problem formulation? What are the gender aspects of the report's factual and analytical dimensions? Should the report contain equality policy proposals?

Source: Information provided by the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications to the OECD and information available online at the Government Offices of Sweden website.*

Procedure for the conduct of gender impact assessment in Northern Ireland

"In the Guide of Statutory Duties for Northern Ireland, the Equality Commission defines the specific elements required for equality impact assessment. Particular attention is given to the consideration of measures to mitigate any adverse impact and to policies that might better achieve the promotion of equal opportunities. The consideration of mitigation and alternatives is identified as a crucial element of the process: authorities must develop options that reflect the different ways of delivering a policy outcome. Mitigation can take the form of lessening the severity of an impact. Consideration must be given to whether separate implementation strategies are necessary for the policy to be effective for each relevant group. Options should be assessed for:

- how they further or hinder equality of opportunity or reinforce or challenge stereotypes;
- the consequences for the group concerned and for the public authority of not adopting an option more favourable to equality of opportunity;
- the costs of implementing each option and whether international obligations would be breached by, or could be furthered by, each of the options."

*Committees of Enquiry, available online at: www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/575/a/18479, and ordinance for gender impact analysis, available online only in Swedish at: www.notisum.se/rnp/sls/lag/19981474.htm.

Source: European Commission (2009), "Evaluating Socio Economic Development", *Sourcebook 2: Methods and Techniques*.

Responsibility for the design and development of GIA tools, training on GIA methodology and, often, the execution of GIA fall within the mandate of national gender institutions. Although employed to various degrees in a majority of OECD countries (including Finland, Switzerland, Sweden, New Zealand, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Korea), GIAs have yet to become routine steps in public policy making. Examples of cases with highest proven record of GIA implementation include Catalonia, where GIA is fully legislated (203 GIAs performed in 2012) and Sweden, where GIAs have not been regulated and are being carried out with different methodologies and at all levels (Boman, 2013), Ongoing challenges related to methodological concerns, lack of expertise to conduct such assessments, and the absence of precise guidelines remain (Ibid). Within the private sector, however, comparable gender analyses have a long history of providing information to corporations related to purchasing practices and service preferences of men and women consumers.

The effectiveness of gender impact assessments strongly depends on implementation

Countries employ a range of strategies to ensure the implementation of GIAs (see Figure 4.15), from requiring that the accompanying documents of all draft laws (60%) and regulations (45%) contain a statement on gender impacts, to including gender analysis as part of regulatory impact assessments (45%), to reporting to parliaments (30%) or independent evaluations or audits (20%).

To maximise their effectiveness, GIAs must be integrated fully into the policy development and implementation process and supported at the highest level of government. One measure to achieve this integration is to require GIA analysis as part of the template for submission of a policy or legal proposal to the Cabinet. Several OECD countries, including Finland, Turkey, Austria, and Spain, legally require GIAs. Following the adoption of the Act for Effective Equality between Women and Men, Spain now requires gender impact reports not only of legal regulations, but also on plans of specific economic, social, cultural and artistic relevance. Germany's RIA procedures call for identification and assessment of a series of impacts, including impacts on gender equality.

In Sweden, binding regulation stipulates that a GIA must be conducted on policy proposals potentially affecting gender equality; bills require a separate section assessing whether proposals and expected outcomes contribute to the achievement of gender equality goals or potentially hinder fulfilment of the goals. To combat the lack of adequate technical expertise on GIA (a challenge for governments in many contexts) Sweden deploys "flying experts" who are seconded temporarily by various ministries and departments to aid with GIAs (Horsburgh, 2011).

The United Kingdom's Equality Duty took effect in 2011 and requires public bodies and those discharging public functions to have "due regard" with respect to discrimination based on race, disability and gender. There is no legal requirement for an equality impact assessment, but the obligation of "due regard" necessitates attention to the potential impact on equality of policies and practices. In this case, the Equality and Human Rights Commission assumes responsibility for assessing compliance with the equality duties (Ibid). In other settings, including Japan, Hungary, New Zealand and Canada, GIA are expected to be included in broader social impact assessments. In New Zealand, gender impact statements are also required in papers to its Cabinet Social Policy Committee. Greece's National Programme for Gender Equality also calls for systematic gender impact assessments of new bills.

Figure 4.15. **Mechanisms used by OECD countries to ensure application of gender analysis (2012)**

	All draft laws must contain a statement on gender impacts (in the accompanying documents)	All draft regulations must contain a statement on gender impacts (in the accompanying documents)	Independent evaluation or audits of the application of gender analysis	Gender analysis is integrated into the mainstream requirement for regulatory impact analysis	Reporting to parliament or a parliamentary committee on the extent of application of the gender analysis
Australia	○	○	●	○	○
Austria	○	○	○	○	○
Belgium	●	●	○	○	○
Canada	○	○	○	●	●
Chile	○	○	●	●	○
Czech Republic	●	●	○	●	○
Finland	●	○	○	●	○
France	○	○	○	○	○
Germany	●	○	○	○	○
Greece	○	○	○	●	●
Ireland	●	●	○	○	○
Israel	○	○	○	●	●
Korea	○	○	●	○	●
Luxembourg	●	●	○	○	○
Mexico	○	●	●	○	●
New Zealand	●	●	○	●	○
Norway	●	●	○	○	○
Slovak Republic	●	○	○	○	○
Spain	●	●	○	●	●
Sweden	●	●	●	●	○
Switzerland	●	○	○	○	○
United States	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total OECD					
● Yes	12	9	5	9	6
○ No	9	12	16	12	15

Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Gender-responsive budgeting

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is one important application of GIA. It applies gender analysis to public spending in order to ascertain how budgets may have a differential impact on women and men**.** The Council of Europe defines GRB as "an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process, and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality." GRB incorporates a gender perspective into each stage of the budgetary cycle and promotes the restructuring of revenues and expenditures to promote transparency and accountability for gender equality.

Political economist Isabella Bakker explains:

> "At first glance, the budget appears to be a gender-neutral policy instrument. It deals with financial aggregates: expenditures and revenues, the surplus or deficit. There is no mention of people at this level of policy. Yet policy-makers should not assume that government expenditures and taxes impact equally on men and women, since men and women generally occupy different social and economic positions."[20]

OECD member countries report a variety of reasons to undertake GRB. Arguably the most powerful instrument of governance, the priorities and practices outlined in budgets reveal much about a government's priorities for its citizens and, in turn, signal its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment through the funding levels allocated for specific projects and actions. GRB can highlight the gender-differentiated effects and impacts of budgetary policies and public expenditures and, similarly, can reveal the gender dimensions of revenues. GRB adds another important dimension to budgetary analyses: because every government and each ministry has a budget, applying gender analysis to budgets can be a very effective way to expose gender differences within policies and programmes. Conversely, state and non-state actors can use GRB to promote specific budgetary allocations targeted to address gender inequalities.

This integration of the gender dimension should happen in all phases of the budgetary cycle: from budgetary proposals to the evaluation and control of the actual expenditures (Decuyper, 2009). GRB does not require separate budgets for women and men, nor does it necessarily mean a radical reform of existing budgetary procedures. Instead, GRB aims to avoid "gender-blind spending" and improve the effectiveness of government programmes by identifying gender-disproportionate consequences of spending appropriations. It can improve budgetary analysis by including women's organisations and other civil society actors in the budgetary process to generate gender-disaggregated data and knowledge of women's status and, in turn, aid governments in realising their commitments to gender equality. Furthermore, the mechanisms to monitor spending can help assess the actual use of resources.

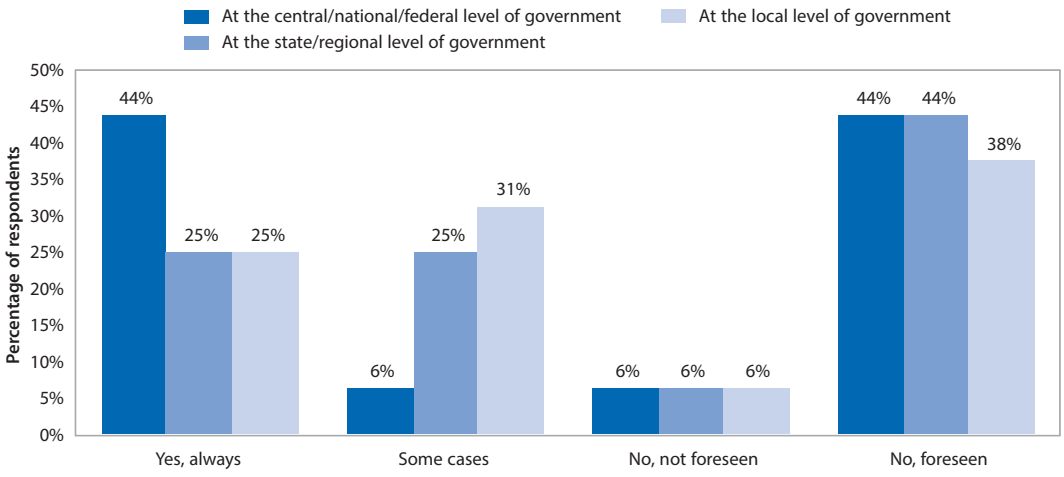
Trends in gender-responsive budgeting

GRB was originally developed by feminist economists in Australia and led to the first Women's Budget Statement tabled there in 1984 (which was produced until 1996). Between 1985 and 1996, there was a 27% increase in federal assistance to families with children, and assistance to the aged rose by 24% (UNPAC, 2010). Further to this, there was a five-fold increase in childcare places for working women. South Africa's first post-apartheid government followed the Australian example in the mid-1990s, launching the Women's Budget Initiative (Fleshman, 2002). Over 90 countries have experimented with some form of gender budgeting over the past decade. Among OECD countries, Belgium,

Finland, France, Israel, Korea, Mexico, Norway, the Slovak Republic, Spain and Sweden report always conducting such evaluations for their central budgets (see Figure 4.16), with Switzerland doing so in some cases. Many countries are also foreseeing to introduce GRB in the future.

The practice is less widespread at the lower levels of government, however, with only 40% of countries at the regional level engaging in GRB and 46% at the local level, always or in some cases.

Figure 4.16. **Gender-responsive budgeting in OECD countries (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Countries use a range of measures to introduce gender budgeting

There is a wide range of global experiences with implementing GRB (see examples in Box 4.19). Most countries that practice GRB use a legal, constitutional or policy basis (see Figure 4.17). For example, Austria, Belgium and Spain legally institutionalised gender budgeting, adding significant legitimacy to the process. The 2007 Belgian law on gender mainstreaming includes a mandate for federal agencies to use GRB. Federal Public Services must attach a "gender note", to their annual budget proposals, which serves as a tool for performing a gender analysis. As the Belgian experience indicates, gender budgeting initially requires extra human and monetary resources to create a stimulating dynamic. Once the process becomes routine and comes closer to achieving its goal, however, the efforts needed diminish and the impact increases.

In the case of Austria, a recent amendment to the Federal Constitution (Article 13(3) 2008) requires that government bodies at all levels aim at gender equality within the context of budgetary management. Budgetary law reforms now require that federal budgets include a gender component. Spain now presents Gender Impact Reports to the Parliament to accompany its General State Budgets. The legal framework for these reports was initiated in 2003 with a law on actions to introduce gender impact assessment in all government regulations. In 2009, the Spanish government approved a methodological guide for the elaboration of this report, which includes a gender impact guide. The Annual Order of the Ministry of Economy and Finance establishes that the report of regulatory impact analysis

will include a gender analysis of each expenditure programme in the budget. Nordic countries, too, have provided substantial leadership on GRB. Since 2005, Norway's Ministry of Finance has issued guidelines to all ministries for a gender-sensitive analysis of their respective budgets (Johan, 2010). Sweden maintains a separate gender equality budget that totals in excess of EUR 40 million per year.[21]

South Africa has used GRB to track allocations to combat gender-based violence. This initiative involved tracking government support to 200 organisations active in this policy area and then determining the budgetary allocations to this sector. Such an analysis helped to identify gaps between the policy goals and the budgets needed to meet these goals. This initiative also involved estimating the costs of violence against women to the state, society and individuals.

Box 4.19. **Gender-responsive budgeting in OECD and key partner countries**

Austria

Gender budgeting in Austria means to analyse the federal, state and community budgets with regard to their impact on the lives of women and men, and to adapt them according to gender equality objectives. The Federal Budget Reform and the principle of outcome orientation are considered a great opportunity for gender budgeting and to promoting gender equality policies in Austria. It aims to employ existing funds in the equitable way in order to achieve effective equality of women and men within the national budget. The key foundation for gender-responsive budget management in all public authorities lies in the Austrian Federal Constitution: "Federation, Laender and municipalities have to aim at the equal status of women and men in the budget management."

Gender budgeting at the federal level means that, as of 2013 federal ministries are obliged to implement effective equality of women and men as one principle of outcome orientation in managing the budget of the federal public administration. The *Federal Budget Law 2013* comprises detailed regulations on outcome-oriented administration including the consideration of the objective of effective equality of women and men. In the future, equality aspects will explicitly be a factor throughout the management cycle of administrative action, from planning to implementation to evaluation.

As of 1 January 2013, each federal ministry and supreme state organ has to determine *gender equality outcomes* for every societal aspect of its activities which – as a consequence – will require gender-specific data. In a subsequent step, these federal authorities have to define *concrete measures (outputs)* and *indicators* in order to realise and monitor the respective *gender equality outcome*. Furthermore, § 41 of the Federal Budget Law 2013 and the Regulation on the presentation of information on outcome orientation in the Annual Federal Budget Statement and the Explanatory Budget Documents regulate the details of gender budgeting application regarding outcomes, outputs and indicators.

The details of the outcome orientation are elaborated in the *Strategy Report* on the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. In the yearly planning, the gender equality outcomes and outputs are set out in the *Annual Federal Budget Statement* as well as the detailed budget-level *Explanatory Budget Documents*. An additional purpose of gender equality outcomes and outputs is to provide members of Parliament and citizens with more information on and insight into the priority areas of each ministry in the respective financial year.

Source: Federal Minister for Women and Civil Service at the Federal Chancellery (2012), *Gender Budgeting Making Effective Equality between Women and Men a Reality … Step by Step to a Gender-equal Budget*.

Box 4.19. **Gender-responsive budgeting in OECD and key partner countries** *(continued)*

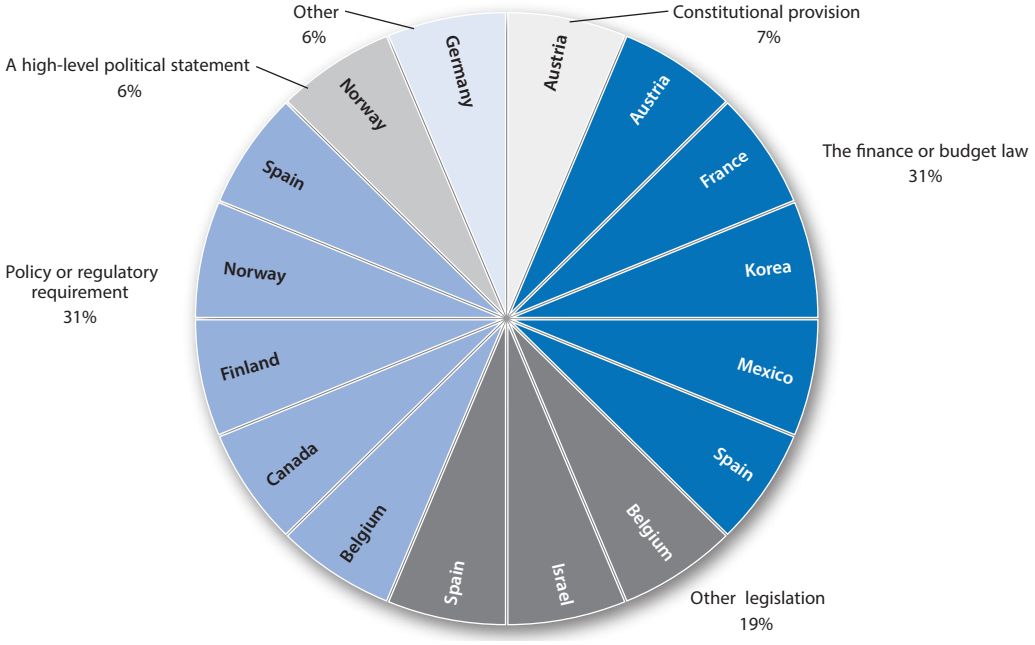
Indonesia

Gender budgeting was first introduced at the local level in Indonesia in 2000 by an international non-governmental organisation that trained and provided resources for local NGOs who performed the work. Since then, Indonesia has taken on gender budgeting extensively at the district, provincial and national levels of government. The national level has been important in facilitating gender-responsive budgeting initiatives at all levels of government in Indonesia by issuing decrees. Presidential Decree 9/2000 and Ministry of Home Affairs Decree 132/2003 have provided regulations that gender-responsive budgeting advocates are able to draw upon to argue the case for making budget allocations more gender responsive (Sharp and Elson 2008). Gender-responsive budgeting had the early support of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment, which undertook a gender budget pilot in the provinces of South Borneo and South Kalimantan (Sharp and Elson, 2008). The Ministry sees gender budgeting as an entry point for strengthening gender mainstreaming in ministries.

At the local level, a number of initiatives focusing on a range of gender issues in budgets have emerged involving NGOs utilising a variety of approaches. A major gender-responsive budgeting program was undertaken by the Asia Foundation 2004-2008 in partnership with several NGOs, involving six provinces and 15 districts.

Source: Satriyo, H. (2010), "Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative", PowerPoint presentation at Donor's Meeting, The Asia Foundation, Jakarta, Indonesia; Sharp, R. and D. Elson (2008) "Improving Budgets: A Framework for Assessing Gender-Responsive Budget Initiatives", in Sri Mastuti et al., *Audit Gender Terhadap Anggaran*, CiBa, Jakarta.

Figure 4.17. **Tools for introducing gender-responsive budgeting (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Since 2006, Mexico's Federal Law on Budget and Fiscal Responsibility dictates that management of federal public resources must include gender analysis. As a result of 2008 budgetary analysis by Mexico's Budgeting for Gender Equity initiative, the Secretariat of National Defense built nearly 900 childcare facilities and accommodation for women in the Army and Air Force Centre for Studies (Fernós, 2010b, p. 20).

Beyond OECD member countries, GRB began in Indonesia, for example, at the national level in service delivery ministries such as National Education, Public Works, Health and Agriculture, and in capacity-development ministries such as the National Development Planning Ministry. In 2012, gender budgeting was piloted with regional governments (see Box 4.19) (Indraswari, 2010). India's 11th Five-Year Plan (2009-13) included strict adherence to GRB, and gender budgeting has been used as a rights-based programming approach at the state level in Kerala, producing practical results such as a Gender-Friendly Infrastructure Scheme, an Income Security Scheme and a Food Security Scheme (Mishra, 2011). Since 1999, a minimum of 5% of the national and local government budgets of the Philippines is to be allocated to activities supporting gender equality, although compliance remains low (OECD, 2010). Participation in gender budget initiatives enabled women's organisations in Brazil to play an active role in the launch of the Brazilian Budget Forum in 2002. Gender equality was a major component of the Forum, the goals of which were to exert social control over public expenditures, to raise public awareness of budgetary processes, and to increase transparency and accountability (Sharp and Elson, 2008).

Challenges and capacity building in gender-responsive budgeting

Despite significant global activity in the area of GRB, however, national gender institutions worldwide still experience difficulty influencing the overall allocation of budgetary resources beyond individual sectoral or line ministries. The example of the United Kingdom (see Box 4.20) illustrates the important role that civil society organisations can play in advancing progress on gender-responsive budgeting and encouraging governments to continue GRB initiatives.

Box 4.20. **Gender-responsive budgeting in the United Kingdom: the critical role of civil society**

The Women's Budget Group is an independent think tank established in the United Kingdom in 1989, consisting of academics and representatives from civil society organisations and trade unions. During the term of the Labour Government elected in 1997, it held regular meetings with UK government officials and politicians. Responding to government-issued pre-budget and budget statements was a key activity, focusing (but not restricting) comments and analyses on disadvantageous changes in the tax and social security systems. Today, the group is a voluntary organisation comprised of over 200 researchers, policy experts and activists whose work includes budgetary analyses in addition to research on various aspects of UK economic and social policies.

Working as an independent organisation outside the government, however, comes with both benefits and challenges. On the positive side, the group's analyses have the potential to increase both awareness and capacity among civil society organisations, and can also – in some cases – provide a platform for interaction and dialogue with the government. On the negative side, not being a part of the government limits its influence and access to data, as budget statements to some degree reflect decisions and allocations already made. This has made it more difficult for the group's analyses and comments to influence the content or formulation of the budget.

Box 4.20. **Gender-responsive budgeting in the United Kingdom: the critical role of civil society** *(continued)*

When engaging in a dialogue with the government, the Women's Budget Group needs to strike a balance between representing the views and expectations of the civil society organisations working to enhance gender equality in the United Kingdom, and the need to be perceived as a constructive and responsible partner in the identification of politically realistic and implementable solutions. Neglecting the former can result in lack of support and loss of credibility, while ignoring the latter could lead to government resistance, and restrict current and future opportunities to influence policies and allocations.

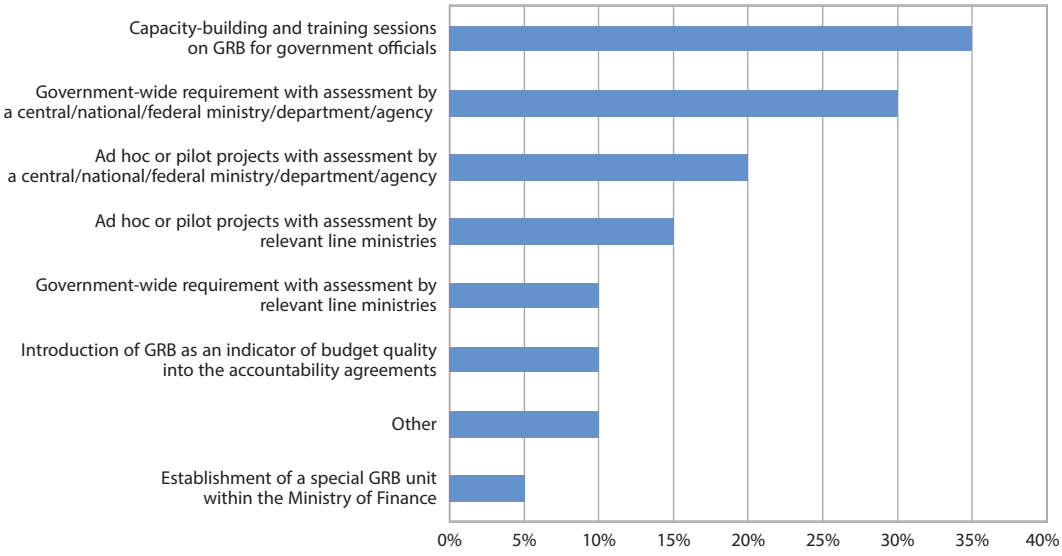
The group's access to information and to officials fluctuated depending on government in power. This demonstrates the key role of political will – as well as the need to adapt to changing external conditions. The group's analyses and comments tend to remain reactive and reformist rather than proactive and transformative, which underlines a key limitation of any external gender-responsive budget initiative regardless of political will and the level of development. Although the establishment of relationships between government officials and organisations like the Women's Budget Group, and gradual changes in the outlook of key decision makers, may not be immediately visible in budget and policies, they may facilitate improvement and gradual change in the longer term.

Source: OECD (2010), "Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness," Issues Brief 6, *Integrating Gender Equality Dimensions into Public Financial Management Reforms*; and www.wbg.org.uk.

In many parts of the world, GRB initiatives are hampered by a lack of reliable gender-disaggregated data and the technical skills to undertake such processes. In the MENA region, for example, a lack of capacity in conducting GRB remains a challenge to progress on gender budgeting (Jad, 2010); however, Morocco was one of the first MENA region countries to undertake gender budgeting in 2002 as part of its broader budgetary reform framework. Beginning with five pilot departments in 2005, Morocco now has 21 departments that integrate gender budgeting into their ministerial department budgets. Since 2005, the Ministry of Finance publishes an annual Report on the Gender Budget and several ministries now incorporate gender into budgetary processes at the local level.

To address the lingering challenges and support the implementation of GRB, countries are focusing primarily on capacity-building and training sessions for government officials, as well as introducing government-wide GRB requirements or undertaking *ad hoc* or pilot GRB projects to build capacity (see Figure 4.18). However, further efforts are required to raise awareness on the importance of GRB. Comparative evidence also confirms that the sustainability and success of GRB initiatives depends on political will. To overcome these barriers, GRB initiatives can enlist central government support and form alliances with other stakeholders who are striving for greater budgetary transparency, improved gender-disaggregated data or greater recognition of the growth-enhancing effects of reducing inequality. This strategy includes engaging women's rights and other gender equality advocates, as well as increasing knowledge and awareness about GRB within the broader population. GRB initiatives have the potential to achieve progress on gender equality, improve the delivery of national policies and reach desired the economic outcomes.

Figure 4.18. **Gender-responsive budgeting implementation mechanisms (2012)**



Source: OECD (2011), *Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.*

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement

Public services are called upon to promote open and inclusive policy making. More than ever, new realities impose new ways of doing things. In order to design responsive policies, achieve the full empowerment of every member of society and obtain strategic insight on key challenges and issues, governments across the globe – in OECD and non-OECD countries – must work to deepen citizens' engagement in policy making (both men and women), and involve business, civil society and other stakeholders. Involving key stakeholders in public consultations to tap into their knowledge and creative ideas is of critical importance for complex policy solutions, such as those related to gender. Turkey's Minister of Family and Social Policy acknowledges that while "revolutions, uprisings, and ideological movements have generated arguments and policies related to the status of women in society … Changes or transformations that were not supported by women have never been achieved" (Sahin, 2013). Engaging women and men from a range of different educational backgrounds, occupational categories and levels, ages, races, abilities and family status in well-designed consultation processes, therefore, is an important step in gender equality policy design. A fair representation of men and women in consultation processes related to the development of gender equality policies that impact both women and men is another basic requirement that may tend to be neglected.

Indeed, while the attention of gender equality actors is often mainly focused on women's representation in politics or voting as the key means for women to express their voices, participation in public consultation activities can provide an opportunity to influence policies, laws and other initiatives prior to their introduction to parliament.

As such, the engagement of public organisations (both national gender institutions and mainstream ministries) in meaningful public consultation and dialogue with civil society, women and men is another integral element to ensuring the legitimacy of these organisations and to maximising their policy effectiveness. Systematic, timely and inclusive consultation with key actors can help to understand of the impact on both men and women, and improve

the design and implementation of public policies, contributing to more inclusive and gender-responsive policy outcomes. Indeed, research suggests that civil society groups and citizens are more satisfied with policy outcomes, and can more easily legitimate policies when they feel greater ownership of the policy process (Traber, 2013; Esaiasson et al., 2012; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2001). Civil society, including women's organisations, also has the potential to enable a more inclusive provision of public goods and improved public service delivery. Effective citizen engagement can increase the quality of inputs for evidence-based decision-making, improve policy responsiveness and reinforce the visibility of the national gender institutions themselves. Finally, direct involvement of women in policy decisions through participation in public consultation or being represented in decision-making posts is the only assurance for the priority and sustainability of gender sensitivity of public policies. As societies become more socially, politically and culturally diverse, regular forums for consultation across a wide spectrum of communities can be an important vehicle for promoting social cohesion and managing change. An effective approach to public consultation, therefore, demands techniques for encouraging the participation of groups with various life circumstances who might otherwise not be prone to participate in consultative forums.

OECD experience suggests that additional investment may be required to:

- Lower participation barriers for men and women who may want to share their views, but face socio-economic, cultural, geographical or other external barriers.
- Increase opportunities for those who may be able to participate but refrain from doing so due to a low interest in politics, a lack of trust in how their input will be used, or a perception that they will gain limited personal benefit from participation (OECD, 2009).

OECD member countries report that effective engagement of the public and broader representation of the population (both men and women) are key tools in improving transparency, and the efficiency and effectiveness of policy making, including greater sensitivity to gender differences. Public consultations are best incorporated into each stage of the policy development implementation and evaluation processes, regardless of whether the initiatives under discussion are gender specific or mainstream.

An example of good consultative practices can be found in Spain's Women Participation Council, which provides a channel for input by women's associations and groups into the policy-making process and matters related to gender equality. Enlarging the involvement of stakeholders has also been prioritised in Latin American contexts, where there is a trend towards ensuring equitable representation from civil society, women's organisations, academics and other experts on gender equality councils or commissions. Mexico and Brazil introduced parity in the representation of civil society and government officials in such mechanisms. In both Brazil and South Africa, where women's movements assumed prominent roles in democratic renewal, women's groups participated actively in both shaping and strengthening gender equality mechanisms. Greece's National Programme for Gender Equality 2010-2013 was developed through extensive consultation with women's organisations, and the programme itself made a commitment to "ongoing and systematic consultation with civil society on Programme implementation" using an interactive portal and reform of the National Committee for Equality between Men and Women that emphasises the development of consultation and co-operation with civil society.[22]

Conversely, a lack of attention to public consultation can have negative effects. There is evidence that the introduction of gender mainstreaming can usher in a period of decreased public consultation (Rankin and Wilcox, 2004). Similarly, gender institutions in some countries in post-Soviet space and some in the Arab region tend to be viewed as top-down bodies with limited connection to grassroots women's groups and infrequent public consultations.

Towards a whole-of-government approach to gender equality and gender-sensitive policies

Despite sustained efforts and many positive steps involving implemented policies and measures to narrow gender gaps, significant gender breaches persist.

The ability of governments to develop policies that are evidence-driven, responsive and inclusive – and promote gender equality – is fundamental to achieving global gender equality and inclusive growth. Effective policy-making capacities, capable of taking into account the needs of men and women, are critical across all sectors, from education and employment to entrepreneurship, defence and housing. This calls for sound collection and dissemination of appropriate data and knowledge about gender disparities across the entire spectrum of policy concerns, and providing the necessary evidence for the development of sound policies that can be transformative in the lives of women and men.

Whole-of-government, comprehensive gender equality strategies should be empowered to maximise efforts and allow for effective implementation. Those strategies must be supported by appropriate institutional frameworks with clear accountability mechanisms across all government institutions. Promotion of gender equality should be the responsibility of all ministries and agencies across governments, from finance to education. Centrally located gender institutions are often perceived as having more authority and better capacity to steer a government-wide implementation of equality agenda, but this is not a generalised rule, and political will and public service leadership support are essential, no matter the choice of institutional structures. Activating and adequately supporting appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of initiatives is another key tool for successful policy development. Effective inter-departmental co-ordination is also critical to implementation efforts.

Transformations involving cultural changes (gender equality, for example) are often inter-generational projects, but this cannot be a pretext to delay policy actions and solutions. National gender institutions and the gender mainstreaming strategies and practices they develop, implement, co-ordinate and promote are of vital importance in achieving gender-equal societies globally.

Key policy recommendations

- ✓ *Enhance effectiveness of national strategies for gender equality and mainstreaming* by developing clear accompanying action plans, timelines, objectives and expected outcomes.
- ✓ *Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities of gender institutions.* Bolster the capacities, mandates, authorities and resources of central gender institutions and gender focal points across the government to facilitate a consistent response throughout government to develop and implement gender-sensitive and responsive programmes, policies and laws across sectors. These should be supported by effective oversight mechanisms for the implementation of gender equality reforms, including relevant legislative committees, supreme audit institutions and/or independent commissions.
- ✓ *Improve and strengthen co-ordination mechanisms across government bodies and across levels of government* to ensure the effective implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives.

- ✓ *Develop the capacity of government institutions to design gender-sensitive policies and programmes* by enhancing the training role of gender-equality mechanisms and ensuring that such training is both mandatory and widely disseminated across government sectors. This can be particularly important in government departments that may not identify their portfolio as having gendered dimensions, such as defence and trade ministries.
- ✓ *Embed a commitment to gender equality and mainstreaming strategies* by establishing effective accountability mechanisms within the public service and in public policies. Use these accountability mechanisms to raise awareness on gender mainstreaming across the public sector and among the general public.
- ✓ *Strengthen the integration of gender impact assessments into policy and programme development and implementation processes*. To be effective, gender impact assessments need to align and be integrated with mainstream regulatory impact assessment processes, and must be supported at the highest levels of government.
- ✓ *Increase capacity within government institutions to conduct gender impact assessment* through training and coaching. Reinforce the potential results of gender impact assessment through case studies and pilot projects. Widely disseminate the results of such examples.
- ✓ *Strengthen the evidence base for gender-sensitive policy-making and budgeting* by expanding the scope and depth of gender-disaggregated statistics, increasing co-ordination among data collecting and producing bodies and improving access to gender-disaggregated data.
- ✓ *Collaborate with relevant partners to develop better indicators* in order to more effectively evaluate the impact of public policies.
- ✓ *Widen the use of gender-responsive budgeting* by building necessary capacities, raising awareness and promoting "budget literacy," so that more people – both within and outside government – understand the budget-making process, including gender-responsive budgeting and its impact in meeting men's and women's needs and reducing gender gaps.
- ✓ *Strengthen the consultation with and engagement of policy stakeholders*, including women, men and civil society organisations in the policy-making process. Civil society organisations should be actively involved in decision-making processes, for example, by participating in advisory bodies that are regularly consulted by the government. New institutions and mechanisms for civic participation and social consensus – including new communication channels – need to be established to expand opportunities for engagement.
- ✓ *Improve the inclusiveness of public consultation for both women and men* "who are willing but not able" or "able but not willing" to participate in public consultation, by creating an enabling environment that ensures equal opportunities for participation. Creating an enabling environment may require lowering barriers (e.g. distance, time, language, access) for those who wish to participate, and increasing incentives for those who are "unwilling to participate".

Notes

1. Accountability can be defined as an obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans. This may require a careful, even legally defensible, demonstration that the work is consistent with the institution's mandate or contract terms.
2. Co-ordination: joint or shared information insured by information flows among organisations. "Co-ordination" implies a particular architecture in the relationship between organisations, but not how the information is used. Horizontal co-ordination refers to the co-ordination across ministries and agencies, while vertical co-ordination implies co-ordination efforts across levels of government.
3. See Beijing Platform for Action (September 1995), Paragraph 201, www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/pdf/BEIJIN.E.PDF.
4. Measures for Gender Equality, Government of Japan, www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pr_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men11/pdf/2.pdf.
5. For example, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women was closed in 1995, followed over the next few years by closure of advisory councils in several provincial contexts.
6. Ibid.
7. See Spring Report of the Auditor General of Canada. Ottawa, 2009.
8. See *Establishing a White House Council on Women and Girls*, Executive Order, March 2009, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/executive-order-creating-white-house-council-women-and-girls.
9. Website of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, available at: www.cepal.org/oig/default.asp?idioma=IN.
10. See Moser, C. and A. Moser (2005), p. 12 as quoted in Redden, S., 2013.
11. This section summarising the ongoing challenges of gender mainstreaming is taken from Redden (2013).
12. As Beveridge and Nott outline, "*equality mainstreaming* refers to the application of this strategy to a whole range of factors, apart from gender, which underpin inequality – race, disability, age and sexual orientation, for example" (2002, p. 306, emphasis in original).
13. See Siltanen (2006, pp. 89-91) for a detailed discussion of the Canadian government's attempts to integrate diversity into its gender equality efforts.
14. See The University of Adelaide (2014), "Gender Indicators Online", www.adelaide.edu.au/wiser/gio/genderindicators.
15. As quoted in Redden (2013).
16. See National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality – Guidelines and Objectives 2010-2021, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Budapest, 2010, p. 89.
17. See New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs (2009), "Indicators for change: Tracking the progress of New Zealand Women," http://mwa.govt.nz/sites/public_files/indicators-for-change-2009.pdf.
18. See White House Council on Women and Girls, Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-being, Washington, 2011.
19. *Ex ante* gender analysis: A gender analysis is normally performed during the design stage of a legislation/regulation/policy/programme. Its objective is to assess whether the planned

legislation/regulation/policy/programme corresponds to the needs and expectations of women as well as men. It can also comprise the assessment of the context and the identification of potential implementation difficulties. *Ex post* gender analysis: Gender analysis is conducted to evaluate the impact of a legislation/regulation/policy/programme after it has been introduced or completed. The *ex post* gender analysis aims at examining whether the objectives of a legislation/regulation/policy/programme have been achieved. It also examines the long-lasting effects of a legislation/regulation/policy/programme on women and men.

20. As quoted by the Gender Budget Project, available at: www.unpac.ca/gender/whatis.html.

21. See UN Economic Commission for Europe, Regional Review of Progress, 2009, p. 15.

22. See General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Our Goal: Substantive Gender Equality National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013, Greece.

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Contents

Executive summary

Chapter 1. Mapping women's access to public life in OECD countries

Chapter 2. Women's leadership in public life

Chapter 3. Women as public employees

Chapter 4. Institutional dimensions of gender equality

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