

Insight Report

# Closing the Gender Gap: The Gender Parity Taskforces

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# Contents

3	Preface
4	Context
6	Public-Private Collaboration for Gender Parity
6	Collaboration Mechanism
7	Expected Impact
7	Taskforces In-Depth
7	The Mexico Gender Parity Taskforce
10	The Turkey Gender Parity Taskforce
12	The Japan Gender Parity Taskforce
14	The Korea Gender Parity Taskforce
16	Conclusion
17	Acknowledgements

# Preface

A nation's competitiveness depends, among other things, on how well it educates and utilizes its talent. Similarly, an organization's performance is determined by the human capital that it possesses and its ability to use this resource efficiently. Companies that successfully engage women may reap a rich diversity dividend, and countries that integrate more women into education and the workforce often see returns in the form of growth, competitiveness and social cohesion.

As gender parity becomes a strategic priority for organizations and governments, demand is increasing for benchmarking tools and best practice exchange and collaboration mechanisms that help to close the economic gender gap. The World Economic Forum's Gender Parity Programme, one of 10 Global Challenge Initiatives at the Forum, seeks to address these needs. Through the *Global Gender Gap Report*, the World Economic Forum quantifies the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracks their progress over time. In addition, our digital repository of best practices to close gender gaps in companies serves as a gateway for those seeking to implement such practices in their own organizations. Building on these practical tools, as well as the strong momentum among government and business leaders to drive change, the Forum launched Gender Parity Taskforces in Mexico, Turkey, Japan and the Republic of Korea to create platforms for public-private collaboration to integrate more women into the economy. The taskforces seek to integrate more women into the economy in each of the four countries and to serve as potential role models for others considering the most effective approaches to closing gender gaps.

This report provides an overview of the taskforce model and an initial assessment of progress to date. We would like to express our deep appreciation to the Gender Parity Taskforce Co-Chairs for their leadership and vision in executing this unique and innovative approach to closing gender gaps. We are also thankful to the Gender Parity Programme's Partners, the project teams that have supported this work inside the Forum and the many stakeholders that have contributed to this work in Mexico, Japan, Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

Two years into these unique experiments it is clear that policy efforts must be complemented by private sector actions to address gender gaps and that the public and private sectors can maximize the effectiveness of their efforts to close the gender gap through continual dialogue and common targets. As we prepare for the third and final year of the taskforces in their present form, it is our hope that this report will serve as a starting point for others to consider public-private collaboration as a critical mechanism for accelerating the integration of women into the economy.

**Richard Samans**  
Managing Director and Member of  
the Managing Board

**Saadia Zahidi**  
Senior Director, Head, Gender Parity  
Programme and Head, Employment, Skills  
and Human Capital

# Context

Efficient talent management is becoming an important strategic area for the success of multinational and local businesses across the globe. In particular, there is a growing business case for gender diversity. One aspect of this “business case” centres on consumption. As women become more economically independent, they also become more significant consumers of goods and services, including for the majority of purchasing decisions of the household. The combined impact of growing gender equality, the emerging middle class and women’s spending priorities is expected to lead to rising household savings rates and shifting spending patterns, affecting sectors such as food, healthcare, education, childcare, clothing, consumer durables and financial services.

Another aspect of the “business case” centres on talent. In many countries, women account for more than half of the college and university graduates. As they begin to take up half of the entry-level positions in several industries, it is a loss for companies if these highly skilled women are forced to choose between work and family at later stages of their career. Additionally, there is evidence for a “diversity dividend”: companies with top-quartile representation of women in executive committees perform better than companies with no women at the top.

Governments also seek to improve human capital development and build productive workforces. Nearly 93% of the gap in educational attainment has been closed globally, with women making up the majority of those graduating from university in over 80 economies. Yet only about 60% of the global economic participation and opportunity gap has been closed. Closing this gap is an opportunity for many countries as they are ideally poised to maximize opportunities for women’s participation in the labour market. In ageing economies in particular, as labour forces shrink and talent shortages emerge, women’s integration into the economy is key to promoting dynamism. Additionally, if countries provide women and men with more ways to combine work and family they are more likely to avoid a “fertility trap”, with low fertility and low female economic participation resulting in a shrinking workforce over time.

There is also a concurrent shift in values and norms on gender roles and gender equality. Traditional roles and responsibilities are giving way to new expectations of women and men at work and at home, including shifting models of the division of labour within families. Women’s expectations of themselves in relation to career and breadwinning, as well as men’s expectations in relation to the family and caregiving, are both changing, although women still bear a disproportionate share of the unpaid work at home. Finally, gender equality is emerging as

a new societal norm, particularly as the media and data transparency shed light on the discrepancies and discrimination. These shifts are also creating adaptive pressures in companies and government.

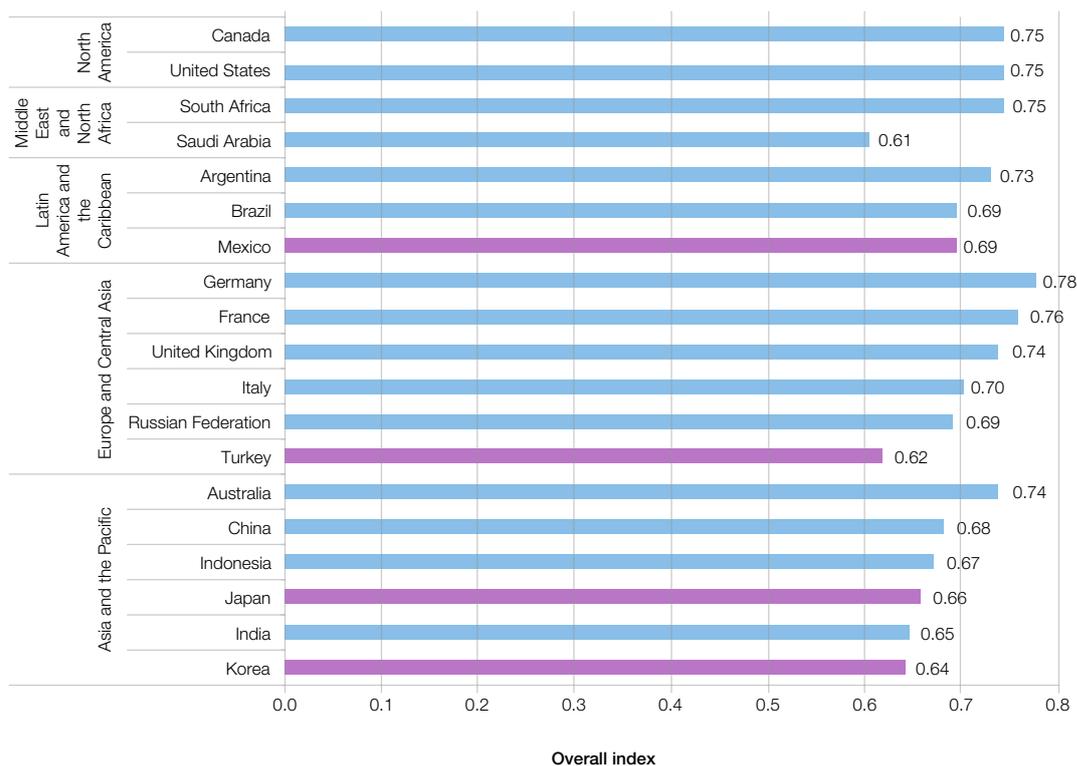
As gender parity becomes a strategic priority for organizations and governments, demand is increasing for benchmarking tools, best practice exchange and other forms of insights and knowledge that shed light on measuring and addressing gender parity. The World Economic Forum has been measuring national gender gaps through the annual *Global Gender Gap Report* for the past decade, providing governments and other constituents with a consistent tool to track progress. In addition, our research tapping into the policies of almost 90 governments pools information on strategies that facilitate women’s integration into the workforce. A public, digital repository of best practices also offers practical information from leading companies on closing the gender gap at the corporate level, along supply chains or in the broader ecosystem.

There is also a growing demand for translating insights into multistakeholder dialogue, collaboration and action to accelerate the path to gender equality. In 2012, the World Economic Forum launched the Gender Parity Taskforces to address the need for cooperation between government and business and between businesses to address gender equality. The pilot taskforces aim to close the economic gender gap by up to 10% in three years in Mexico, Turkey, Japan and since mid-2014, the Republic of Korea.<sup>1</sup> They were co-designed with relevant local government and business constituencies, given the interest and engagement of relevant high-level stakeholders in these countries. While these four initial taskforces are designed to address gender gaps in their respective countries given their unique local context, they are also expected to serve as potential public-private collaboration models for other countries and regions seeking to address gender disparities.

This report provides an overview of the taskforce model and an initial assessment of progress to date since the establishment of the taskforces, as a starting point for others who seek to use a practical framework for accelerating progress on closing economic gender gaps and as a tool for the four pilot countries. A final report will be released on the completion of the taskforce lifecycles.

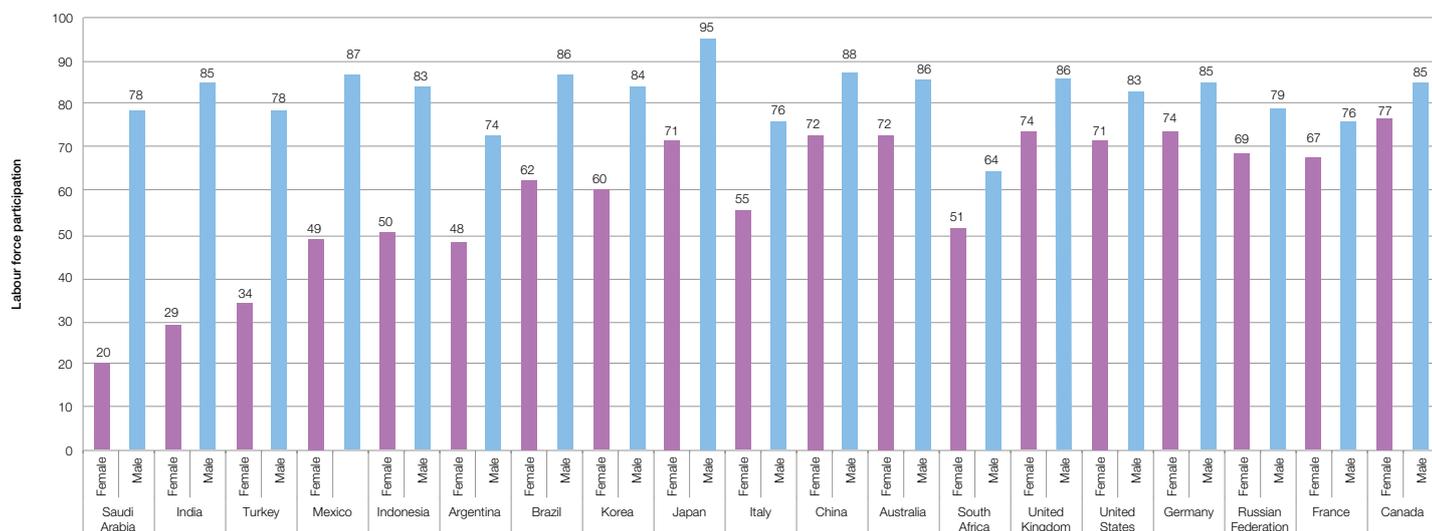
<sup>1</sup> In the same year, G20 leaders committed to tackling the barriers to women’s full economic and social participation for the first time.

**Figure 1: Overall gender gap index of the G20 major economies by region, 2014**



Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index*, 2014.  
 Note: Countries are sorted by the overall score within each region.

**Figure 2: Female and male labour force participation of the G20 major economies, 2013**



Source: *International Labour Office (ILO), ILOSTAT Database*, 2015, <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata>.  
 Note: Countries are sorted by the labour force participation gap between female and male.

# Public-Private Collaboration for Gender Parity

Government policies are critical for shaping the type of ecosystem that facilitates women's economic participation, and many governments now institute policies that encourage women to work and make it easier for them to return in the workforce. Governments have various tools at their disposal to influence gender diversity in the workplace. Support mechanisms such as childcare facilities and parental leave, and also tax incentives and adapted legislative structures, can encourage more women to work or remain in the workforce. In turn, companies have a role in developing a favourable environment to avoid leaks and blockages in their talent pipelines, through ensuring commitment from leadership, monitoring women's representation, setting targets and developing accountability mechanisms or addressing corporate culture on diversity.

These interventions do not work as a checklist of actions. The right leadership context is critical and must be accompanied by a holistic set of priorities, a long-term commitment with a deep understanding of the industry context, organizational culture and the local policy environment.

While different companies face different barriers to change, depending on their industry and other factors, there is an opportunity for accelerating change through the sharing of experiences. There is also opportunity for improved dialogue between governments and business to address the impact of various policy measures and incentives. There is thus a growing need for intra-industry and inter-industry as well as cross-sectoral dialogue and collaboration to share learnings, align on goals and reduce complexity. This type of cooperation has been rare, if non-existent, in the gender space in many countries. The Gender Parity Taskforces thus enable these unique interactions among businesses and between business and government and serve as a neutral platform for new or existing initiatives to accelerate progress through a data-driven approach adapted to local realities.

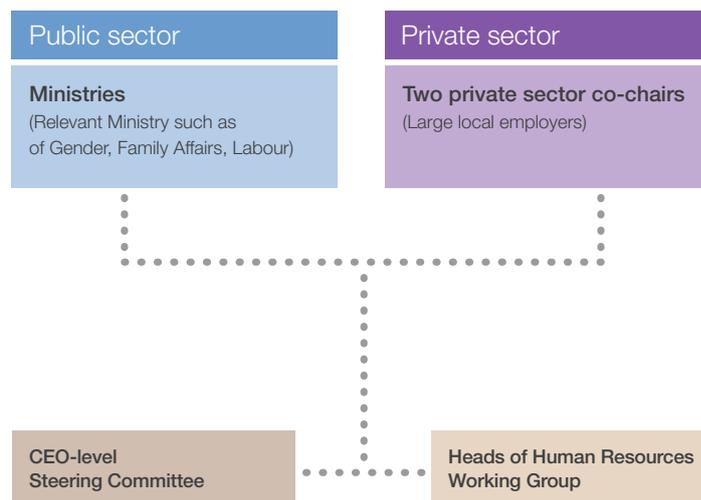
## Collaboration Mechanism

The aim of the taskforces is to close economic gender gaps by up to 10% in three years, particularly along the criteria used in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index:

- Improving female representation in the labour force
- Increasing women's participation at professional and senior levels
- Closing the wage gap

In addition, Mexico and Turkey included a fourth objective specifically related to the promotion of businesses founded by women as a fundamental part of production chains.

### Leadership and taskforce structure



The role of the World Economic Forum is to help provide a common starting point for gap analysis, a neutral platform for dialogue between multiple stakeholders and a mechanism for tracking commitments and change. To meet its objectives, the three year engagement of the taskforces broadly follows three stages.

First, after the establishment of the leadership team (typically two private and one public sector co-chairs) and identification of leading biggest employers to form the membership base, an assessment is carried out to understand the local context, the business perceptions and where the biggest gaps are. The overall objectives of the taskforce are defined and a set of measurable individual or collective commitments are made. Developing a strong trust foundation between all taskforce actors is a key element at this stage.

Second, the taskforce platform is used to share and exchange successful interventions and engage all stakeholders in an informed dialogue. The leadership team coordinates and monitors the initiative closely to ensure accountability and implementation of commitments.

Finally, key learnings are extracted from each project allowing for cross-taskforce exchange and for other countries to develop similar models tailored to their local context. At this stage, the taskforce's original purpose is complete and any future iterations are developed and carried forward by the relevant local constituents.

## Taskforce lifecycle



## Expected Impact

While the taskforces are designed for the specific purpose of private-private and public-private collaboration towards an overarching goal of closing the economic gender gap by 10%, their impact is expected to be more widespread, both in the near and long term.

Within the taskforce itself, at the company level we expect an increase in female representation at all levels, narrower wage gaps and increased representation of women-owned enterprises in member companies' value chains. Public sector engagement is expected to provide a clearer view of business needs, leading to advances in the regulatory environment for gender diversity. The regular exchange and communication between the two sectors and between companies is also expected to create a culture of more open dialogue and accelerate cross-sectoral learning.

The collective impact of this information exchange and actions, given the size and influence of the constituents involved, is expected to result in tangible progress at the national level, including increased female representation in the labour force and a stronger emphasis on gender in national economic policy-making and on the business agenda. Furthermore, a public commitment by influential leaders of the business community along with government senior leadership creates broad awareness and positive momentum for the topic well beyond those involved with the taskforce. Most taskforces have made continued awareness-raising an explicit goal for the leadership and members of the group.

The final report on the completion of each taskforces original term at the end of 2015 (in the case of Korea, 2017) will track progress against each of these dimensions.

## Taskforces In-Depth

### The Mexico Gender Parity Taskforce

2.5% \*

#### Context

Mexico ranks 80th out of 142 countries in the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2014*. Compared to 2006, its economic participation and opportunity score has improved by 15%, with 55% of its economic gender gap closed today, placing Mexico in 120th position among 142 countries (See Figure 3). Nevertheless, women continue to face many cultural and organizational barriers when it comes to economic empowerment.

In Mexico, only 48% of all women participate in the labour force, while the male labour force participation rate is 83%. While participation for women aged 15-24 has been decreasing over time, partly due to growing tertiary enrolment where the gender gap has been nearly closed, for all other age groups women's participation – and employment – has been increasing (Figure 4).

The informal sector accounts for nearly half of working women, which is usually not subject to labour legislation such as the mandatory 12-week maternity leave law.<sup>2</sup> In the formal sector, while women make up nearly 45% of all professional and technical positions, they still hold only 32% of the legislator, senior officials and manager roles, indicating wider gender gaps among senior positions. Business leaders rank Mexico 116 among 131 countries on the ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership in the country. According to the latest internationally comparable data, women hold only 7% of board roles among listed companies – falling below the OECD average of 10% – while only 15% of firms have top managers that are women and only 26% of firms have any female participation in ownership.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), México: Mejores Políticas para un Desarrollo Incluyente, 2012. <http://www.oecd.org/mexico/Mexico%202012%20FINALES%20SEP%20eBook.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), México: Mejores Políticas para un Desarrollo Incluyente, 2012. <http://www.oecd.org/mexico/Mexico%202012%20FINALES%20SEP%20eBook.pdf>.

\* in 2012 the Economic Participation and Opportunity score was 0.538 and in 2014 it was 0.551, a relative improvement of 2.5%.

Gender gaps in terms of paid work and unpaid work are also among the largest in the OECD.<sup>4</sup> Women's average earned income is nearly half that of men and business leaders estimate severe wage inequality even between those employed in similar work. In the World Economic Forum's Executive Opinion Survey 2014, Mexico ranked 116th out of 131 countries when asked: "In your country, for similar work, to what extent are wages for women equal to those of men?"

Societal expectations and a shortage of policies to aid the advancement of women in the workforce are among the causes behind the economic gender gap.<sup>5</sup> A study from 2014 based on data from 29 Mexico-headquartered companies and subsidiaries across 12 industries shows that 70% of interviewees stated work-life balance as being a key challenge for women professionals.<sup>6</sup> According to the study, only 24% of companies offer referral/support for childcare. Women also spend about 373 minutes a day on unpaid work, a little over four more hours than men.

Since the 2012 launch of the taskforce, a series of policy reforms have taken place with regard to the legal landscape affecting gender disparities. For example, in November 2012, Mexico's former president, Felipe Calderón, modified the Federal Labour Law to promote gender equality by including a mandatory paternity leave of five days with full salary for male employees and six weeks' leave before the birth of a child and six weeks after the birth of a child for female employees.<sup>7</sup> In February of 2014, Article 41 of the Federal Constitution was amended to guarantee gender parity in the nomination of candidates in federal and local congressional elections.<sup>8</sup> The first of its kind in the country, this amendment made Mexico the fifth country in Latin

<sup>4</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), México: Mejores Políticas para un Desarrollo Incluyente, 2012. <http://www.oecd.org/mexico/Mexico%202012%20FINALES%20SEP%20eBook.pdf>.

<sup>5,6</sup> Catalyst, Breaking Barriers for Women in Corporate Mexico? (Not So Fast), 2014. <http://www.catalyst.org/media/breaking-barriers-women-corporate-mexico-not-so-fast>

<sup>7</sup> DLA Piper, Mexico enacts amendments to Federal Labor Law, 2012. <https://www.dlapiper.com/en/europe/insights/publications/2012/12/mexico-enacts-amendments-to-federal-labor-law/>

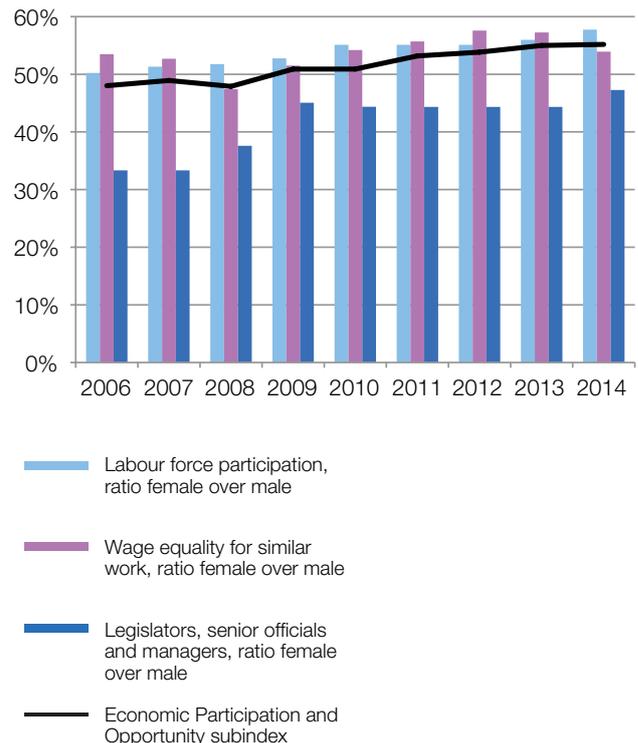
<sup>8</sup> Cimacnoticias, Aprueba Congreso paridad en candidaturas locales y federales, 2013. <http://www.cimacnoticias.com.mx/node/65088>

America to constitutionalize gender parity in the candidate lists of political parties.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, while there was initially no mention of women in the *Pacto por México*, the National Development Plan (2013-2018) now incorporates a gender perspective with the aim of promoting gender equality throughout the country's overall economic development strategy.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> International IDEA, Gender and constitutionalism in Mexico: from quotas to parity?, 2014. <http://www.constitutionnet.org/news/gender-and-constitutionalism-mexico-quotas-parity>

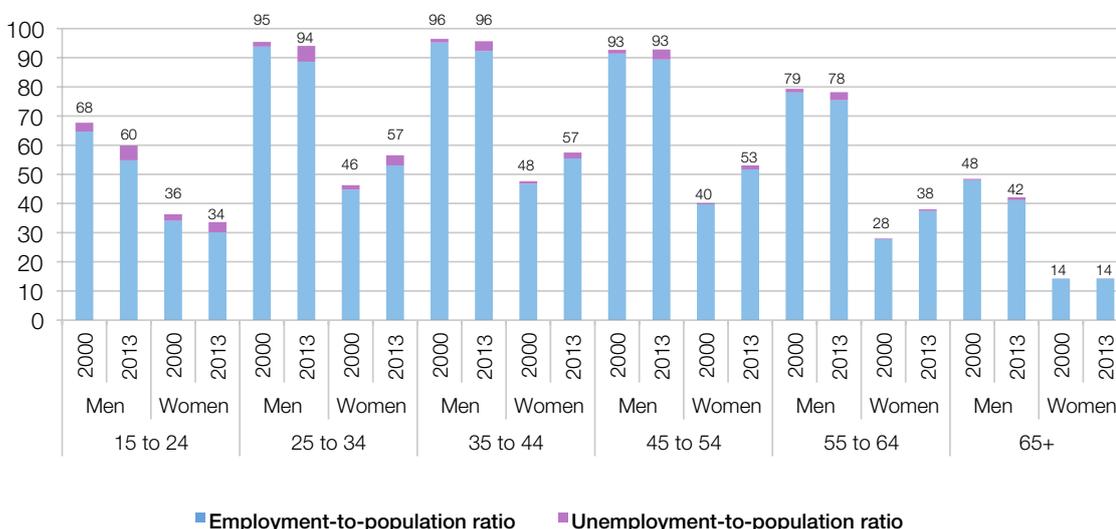
<sup>10</sup> Gobierno de la Republica, Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2013-2018. <http://pnd.gob.mx/>

**Figure 3: Economic participation and opportunity sub-index and selected variables, Mexico, 2006-2014**



Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index*, 2014.

**Figure 4: Labour force participation, employment and unemployment in Mexico by age and sex, 2000-2013**



Source: *International Labour Office (ILO), ILOSTAT Database, 2015*, <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata>.

## Key Figures

- Part-time employment (female, male): 28.5, 13.5
- Average minutes spent per day on unpaid work (female, male): 373, 113
- Share of women on boards of listed companies: 7
- Workers in informal sector (female, male): 45, 55
- Adult unemployment rate (female, male): 4.9, 4.8
- Percentage of tertiary-level STEM graduates (female, male): 32, 68
- Gross enrolment in tertiary education (female, male): 28, 30
- Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership: 116th out of 131 countries

Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index*, 2014.

## Taskforce at a glance

With Mexico experiencing rapid demographic, social and political transformation, improving the flow of talent and skills, including female talent, serves as a strategic target. To accelerate progress on closing Mexico's economic gender gap, the taskforce was launched in 2012 under the patronage of Margarita Zavala, First Lady of Mexico (2006 to 2012) and President of the Council of National System for Integral Family Development and two private sector co-chairs: Angelica Fuentes, CEO, Omnilife-Angelissima Group, and Carlos Danel, Chairman, Genera. Since 2013, the taskforce has been spearheaded by the two private-sector co-chairs and has engaged nearly 50 of Mexico's largest companies at different stages of the initiative.

At the inception of the initiative, a survey to assess the status quo was conducted among participating companies and served as a guide to map the actual situation within companies, highlighting the main barriers as perceived by the business sector, and shedding light on some of the enabling factors that should be leveraged to accelerate progress. Some key findings include:

- The median share of women on boards was just above 10% and in no case did respondents report a share greater than 35% in their companies.
- Women with higher levels of responsibility usually have more difficulty in making work compatible with marriage and motherhood.
- There is heterogeneity among companies with respect to the presence of women-owned businesses in the supply chain.
- Most companies already have or are in the process of introducing interventions to reduce gaps.
- Leadership commitment is the critical factor for the successful implementation of policies and practices, whereas path-dependence appears to be the main barrier to the intra-organizational transfer of best practices.

Based on this survey, member commitments include methods of recruiting and developing female talent at all levels, capacity-building for male and female managers

to implement diversity policies and increase transparency of career progression. These actions are supported by additional measures of establishing quantifiable objectives and regular progress measurement.

A follow-up survey conducted in late 2014 provided preliminary results on the progress to date. Since the previous year, for instance, over 80% of companies had implemented a programme to foster work-life balance and more than 60% adjusted their policies to allow for more flexible working times. A strong emphasis had been placed on concrete measures to identify and recruit companies led by women as part of supply chains. Members committed to take further action, including methods to recruit and develop female talent at all levels, measure and monitor the gap at all levels, establish quantifiable objectives, demonstrate and communicate the commitment by leaders and to build capacity for managers (men and women) at all levels to implement diversity policies and increase transparency of career progression.

Since the initiation of the taskforce, proactive and vocal engagement of the co-chairs and committed members has also succeeded in raising awareness of the economic case for gender parity in business more broadly in Mexico. This has helped to foster an environment of learning and mutual support for companies through the exchange of knowledge and successful practices and encouraged dialogue on the cultural paradigms that hinder society from attaining gender parity. For the remaining duration of the taskforce the group will seek to strengthen its collaboration with the public sector and expand the engagement of the local, rather than multinational, private sector to share learnings thus far and address cultural barriers specific to local firms.

***“Over the past three years, the Gender Parity Taskforce has undertaken ground-breaking initiatives to close the economic gender gap in Mexico’s corporate sector. However, we also faced clear challenges in terms of full participation and engagement. In addition, public sector involvement is absolutely necessary to move forward. We achieved important milestones and we are ready to build on this success in the future. We are resolved to put to work the valuable insights gained to continue to move the needle towards our ultimate goal.”***

Angelica Fuentes, CEO, Omnilife, and Founder, Angelissima, Mexico

***“When one becomes a bit more practical about it, there is also a business case to be made for any country or any company. If you’re only using the talent of half of the population, you really are missing out on the creation of a lot of value that comes from full inclusion of men and women into economic issues.”***

Carlos Danel, Chairman, Genera, Mexico



### Context

Turkey ranks 125th out of 142 countries on the *Global Gender Gap Index 2014* and 132nd on the Economic Participation and Opportunity Sub-Index, one of the lowest performing countries in the region. While Turkey experienced a steady decline of its Economic Participation and Opportunity Sub-Index between 2006 and 2011, Turkey's score has been improving since 2012. (See Figure 5)

With women's labour force participation at 32% compared to 76% for men, the country ranks 128th overall on the labour force participation gender gap. As shown in Figure 6, the participation levels for women aged 15-24 have remained the same over the past decade and decreased for older women (55-64) but have increased for all other age groups.

Women's tertiary enrolment rates at 64% are lower than those of men at 75% and women are particularly outnumbered in fields of education, such as, business and administration, agriculture, computing and engineering. This reflects in the labour market, where women hold only 37% of all professional and technical positions. The gap is wider for senior roles, with women holding only 12% of legislator, senior official and manager roles, placing Turkey among the bottom 20 countries on this indicator.<sup>11</sup> On wage gaps, while the average earned income gender gap puts Turkey at 126th place globally, the gap for men and women in similar work is slightly better, at 87th place, according to business leader perceptions.

There is a significant potential for greater economic empowerment of women and the target of increasing the percentage of women's labour force participation up to 41% by 2023 is included in the National Employment Strategy (2014-2023) along with detailed strategies to achieve it. Moreover, it is stated in the 10th Development plan of Turkey that it is crucial to promote labour force participation and employment among the youth and women particularly. In an effort to encourage the hiring and retention of women and youth, the employer share of social security contributions for women and youth (aged 18-29) recruited between May 2008 and May 2010 from among those that were registered as unemployed for more than six months is fully or partly covered for a period of five years by the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).<sup>12</sup> Since 2012, a series of policy reforms have taken place with regard to gender. For example, the Minister of Family and Social Policies announced that the right to 16 weeks of paid maternity leave will progressively be extended to many public servants. Additionally, a new law was adopted on the protection of family and prevention of violence.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> World Economic Forum *Global Gender Gap Report 2014*

<sup>12</sup> G20 Country Policy Briefs, OECD, ILO, <http://www.oecd.org/els/48725152.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> European Commission, EU-Turkey: In Istanbul on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, 2013. [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/fule/headlines/news/2013/11/20131107\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/headlines/news/2013/11/20131107_en.htm)

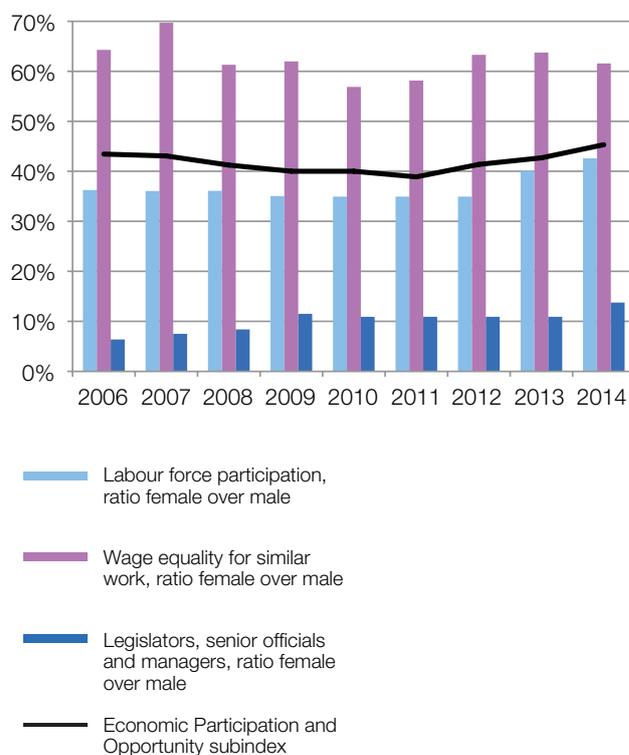
\* in 2012, the Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap score was 0.414 and in 2014 it was 0.453, a relative improvement of 9.5%.

### Key Figures

- Part-time employment (female, male): 24.1, 6.7
- Average minutes spent per day on unpaid work (female, male): 377, 116
- Share of women on boards of listed companies: 8
- Workers in informal sector (female, male): 23, 77
- Adult unemployment rate (female, male): 10.8, 8.5
- Percentage of tertiary-level STEM graduates (female, male): 34, 66
- Gross enrolment in tertiary education (female, male): 64, 75
- Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership: 108th out of 131 countries

Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index, 2014.*

**Figure 5: Economic participation and opportunity sub-index and selected indicators, Turkey, 2006-2014**

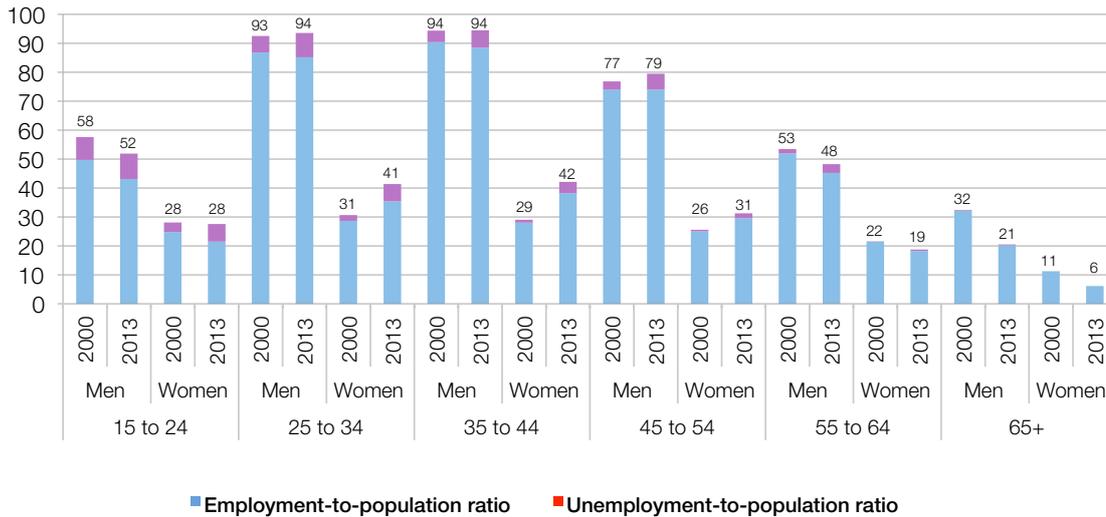


Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index, 2014.*

***“The Equality at Work Platform is a highly significant platform as it is an initiative started with the joint efforts of the public and private sectors to promote women's economic participation in Turkey and establish gender equality in all phases of work life starting from recruitment. The co-chairs of the platform come from the leading firms in Turkey and embrace the platform seriously, which guides and encourages the other firms in the labour market.”***

Aysenur Islam, Minister of Family and Social Policies of Turkey

**Figure 6: Labour force participation, employment and unemployment in Turkey by age and sex, 2000-2013**



Source: International Labour Office (ILO), ILOSTAT Database, 2015, <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata>.

### Taskforce at a glance

The taskforce was launched in 2012 under the patronage of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the Co-Chairmanship of Güler Sabancı, Chairman and Managing Director of Sabancı Holding, and Ferit Sahenk Chairman of Doğu Group. Locally the initiative is named the “Equality at Work Platform” and includes nearly 80 of the largest employers in the country including cross-industry conglomerates. Members come mainly from the financial services industry (17%), the mobility industry (11%), the consumer industry (12%) and cross-industry conglomerates (12%). In addition to business leaders from multiple industries, the taskforce includes civil society leaders making it one of the biggest multistakeholder coalitions on gender diversity in the country.

Following a study of key intervention areas, 11 principles aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination in the declaration of equality at work set the foundation for the taskforce direction as members pledged to lead the way in promoting these principles across Turkey. These principles include the definition of criteria of equal opportunities for women and men regarding all human resource policies, the respect of the policy of equal pay for equal work and the establishment of environments which protect work-life balance. Taskforce members then committed to at least one concrete area of action, within the framework of a best practice manual, *Manual for Establishing Corporate Gender Equality*. This document provides five key recommendations<sup>14</sup> to increase gender equality and describes human resources practices that selected taskforce members have successfully put in place, such as specific performance criteria relating to gender equality, career development or arrangements allowing for work-life balance, serving as a source of learning for all members.

In addition to the leadership working group, different activities are spearheaded by a number of working groups sourced from member companies (e.g. executive boards, communications, human resources). Surveys and events are used to monitor members’ commitment to discuss common obstacles and to further exchange best practice. Commitments and actions by member companies include various projects, such as an intra-company competition to benchmark and share best practices among the various companies of a conglomerate, locally-relevant leadership trainings for women only, new tracking systems to monitor female recruitment, the inclusion of gender data in management reporting and the revision of supplier contracts to enhance gender diversity. More than half of the taskforce members had an increase in the percentage of female employment at all levels. In addition to these company-level changes, by publicly recognizing their commitment to gender diversity, taskforce members help to ensure that gender diversity remains on the national agenda.

The final year of the current taskforce term will focus on expanding membership to include more employers, while ensuring that the collaboration with leading firms is strengthened. New initiatives will focus on awareness raising and effective communication of the taskforce messages through the use of multimedia. A guidebook on the *Extension of the Equality at Work to the Supply Chain*, which aims at integrating gender diversity practices in the supply chain, is also under development to expand the impact of members’ efforts beyond their direct employees.

A website in both Turkish and English is available for consultation. <http://www.isteesitlikplatformu.gov.tr>

<sup>14</sup> Change in mentality; evaluation of current status; preparing improvement plan and setting targets; developing and implementing human resources policies; and getting support.

## The Japan Gender Parity Taskforce



### Context

In the *Global Gender Gap Report 2014*, Japan ranked 104th out of 142 countries, with an upward trajectory since the first annual report in 2006, and 102nd on the Economic Participation and Opportunity Sub-Index, with a similar improvement in scores (Figure 7). While women's tertiary enrolment is at 58%, as compared to 65% for men, women's labour force participation is at 64% compared to 84% for men, one of the largest gaps among the OECD. While the labour force participation rate of women between 15 and 24 is just a little over that of men in the same age group, within all other age groups there is at least a 20 percentage point difference between women and men's participation (See Figure 8). These rates have been improving over the past decade for women in all age groups in the working population, although the crisis of 2008-2012 temporarily altered this tendency, when part-time employment which is mainly confined to women was particularly affected.<sup>15</sup>

Accelerating women's integration into the economy is particularly critical given that Japan faces the prospect of the labour force shrinking by 15% over the next two decades as the population declines to 97 million by 2050.<sup>16</sup> At 1.41 births per woman and a population growth rate of 0.29%, Japan is well below replacement levels, which further underpins the economic case for greater gender equality in the labour market.<sup>17</sup> The old-age dependency ratio – the number of elderly as compared to the working age population – is already at 36% and will grow to 49% by 2025 at current rates.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, for most families and households in such a scenario, dual incomes will be necessary.

In a special address at the 44th World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe underlined the importance of gender parity in Japan and stated that it is possible to achieve stronger growth by boosting underutilised resources and having a diverse work environment, including more efficient labour utilization by promoting a more gender-balanced economy. It is his intention to make Japan “a place where women shine” by ensuring that 30% of all senior leadership posts will be occupied by women by 2020.

<sup>15</sup> ILO-IMF-OECD-WBG, Achieving stronger growth by promoting a more gender balanced economy, G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting, 2014. <http://www.oecd.org/g20/topics/employment-and-social-policy/ILO-IMF-OECD-WBG-Achieving-stronger-growth-by-promoting-a-more-gender-balanced-economy-G20.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan

<sup>18</sup> Hausmann R., Tyson L. and Zahidi S., *The Global Gender Gap Report 2013*, World Economic Forum, 2013, <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gapreport-2013>

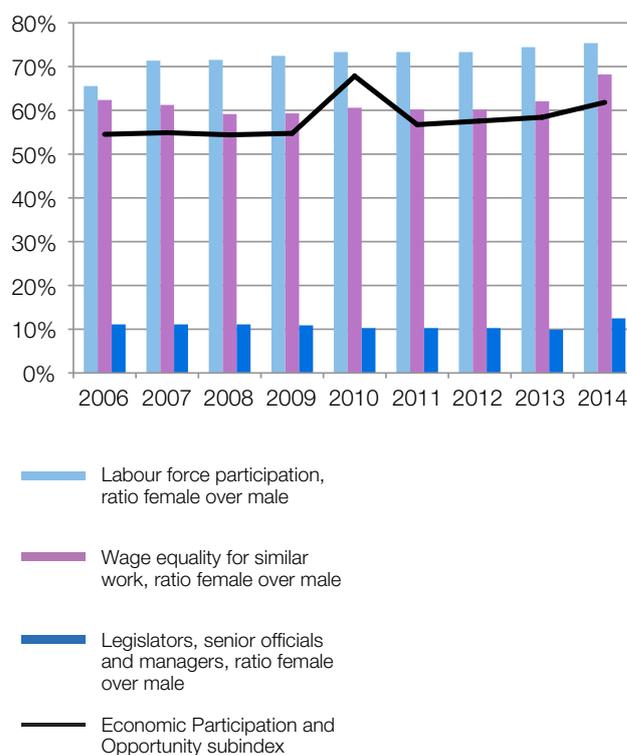
\* In 2012, the Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap score was 0.576 and in 2014 it was 0.618, a relative improvement of 7.4%.

### Key Figures

- Part-time employment (female, male): 33.4, 10.1
- Average minutes spent per day on unpaid work (female, male): 326, 69
- Share of women on boards of listed companies: 3.8
- Workers in informal sector (female, male) n/a
- Adult unemployment rate (female, male): 4.0, 4.6
- Percentage of tertiary-level STEM graduates (female, male): 14, 86
- Gross enrolment in tertiary education (female, male): 58, 65
- Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership: 74th position out of 131 countries

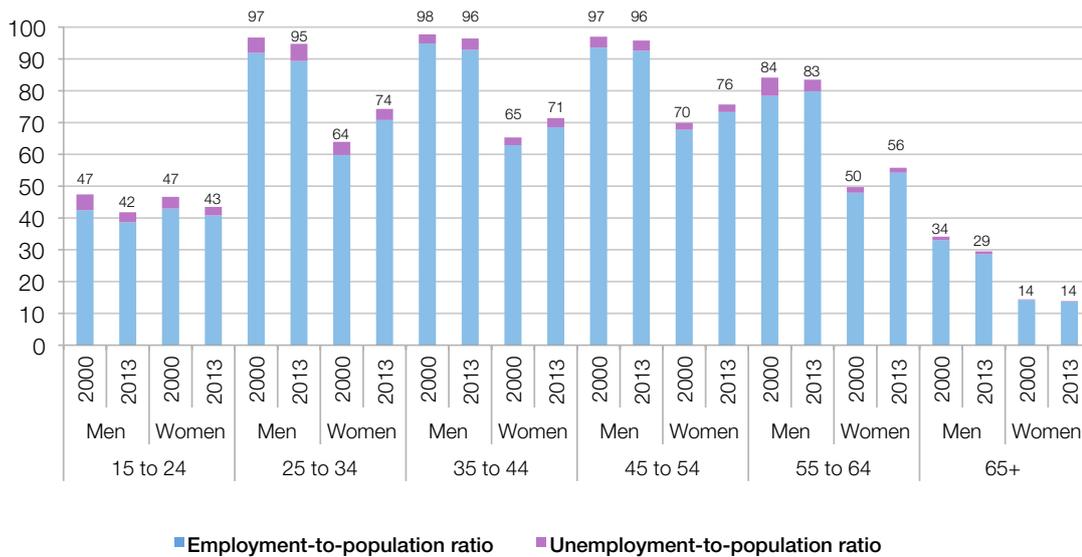
Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index*, 2014.

**Figure 7:** Economic participation and opportunity sub-index and selected variables, Japan, 2006-2014



Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index*, 2014.

**Figure 8: Labour force participation, employment and unemployment in Japan by age and sex, 2000-2013**



Source: International Labour Office (ILO), ILOSTAT Database, 2015, <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata>.

### Taskforce at a glance

The Japan Gender Parity Taskforce is a network of organizations headed by male and female Japanese leaders, which have proclaimed gender parity as critical to achieving economic growth and progress in Japan. Over 70 leaders from business, public sectors and international organizations launched the taskforce in November 2012 in Tokyo and expressed their strong support for driving the gender parity agenda forward in Japan. The taskforce structure has evolved into a broader leadership base of business leaders and representatives from relevant ministries, led by Yukako Uchinaga, Chairman of the Board, J-Win, Japan, Sakie T. Fukushima, President, G&S Global Advisors, Japan, and receives intellectual guidance from a variety of stakeholders, including Kathy Koll Matsui, Vice-Chair and Co-Head, Macro Research Asia, Goldman Sachs, Japan, and Yoko Ishikura, Professor Emeritus, Hitotsubashi University, Japan.

Through the engagement of two leading industry associations in Japan (J-Win and Keizai Doyukai), an assessment was conducted with over 300 companies to understand the gender parity outlook in the country. The findings for the survey were published, in collaboration with McKinsey, in an Insight Report on *Closing the Gender Gap in Japan*, providing business leaders with direction and a toolkit for action. If companies want to see more women at the top of the corporate hierarchy, it requires a holistic approach to gender parity and addressing a number of broad areas of practices that can make a significant difference.<sup>19</sup>

The most critical report findings highlighted that the “hard” elements, such as flexible working hours and other work-life balance programmes, are often in place. The next step lies in accelerating their use and acceptance by all employees, male and female. In contrast, the adoption of “soft” elements, such as training – for both women and

men – to build the leadership skills of women and the right environment within the broader employee base for women to successfully lead, are still needed. The perceptions of the role of human resources focus currently more on systems and administration as opposed to talent-development training.

Since its inception, and despite the change of government, the Japan Gender Parity Taskforce has received strong support from the public sector, but with the proclamation of Abenomic principles, gender equality has become a central pillar of the reform process. A private meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and global women leaders held at the Annual Meeting in Davos in 2014 led to a high-level symposium, the World Assembly for Women (WAW). As increasing national and international attention has been placed on the status of women in Japan, there is a need for coordination among existing actors and new actors that have entered the space.

The taskforce, therefore, aims to act as a hub and integrating platform for exchange for all relevant local initiatives. It further has the objective of offering global diagnostic and benchmarking tools to accelerate transformation. Additionally, a new Japan Diversity Network, headed by the taskforce co-chairs, is convening various initiatives that have the objective of accelerating the advancement of women in Japan.<sup>20</sup> Coordinated action by the business community is a critical next step for accelerating success towards greater gender parity, and increased collaboration between public and private sector remains critical. The remaining time in the taskforce lifecycle will be used to strengthen the ecosystem for these goals.

<sup>20</sup> The platform was announced for private sponsorship in April 2014 and the kick-off symposium held on September 23, 2014 in the Tokyo, attended by about 900 participants.

**“Japan must become a place where women shine.”**

Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

<sup>19</sup> The findings from the research included at least five elements as levers: work environment and work-life balance; awareness and capacity-building; measurement and target-setting; leadership and company commitment; and incentives and accountability.

## The Korea Gender Parity Taskforce

***The initiative in Korea is the most recent taskforce, launched in mid-2014. As changes on the ground are not immediately reflected in international databases, no impact on the Global Gender Gap Index can be perceived at this early stage. However there are already valuable lessons to be learned from the local implementation of the model.***

### Context

In the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Index 2014*, the Republic of Korea ranked 117th overall out of 142 countries and 124th on the Economic Participation and Opportunity Sub-Index. At 55%, women's labour force participation is well below that of men at 76%. However, between 2000 and 2013, it has increased for most age groups except for women between 15 and 24 and women between 35 and 44.

The Republic of Korea is one of the lowest-performing countries when it comes to wage gaps for similar work, according to business leader perceptions. Furthermore, while women hold 41% of all professional and technical positions, they occupy only 11% of legislator, senior official and manager positions.<sup>21</sup> Women made up only 1% of the nation's corporate boards in 2011<sup>22</sup> and business leaders rank Korea at 120 out of 131 countries on women's ability to rise to positions of enterprise leadership, according to the *Global Gender Gap Report 2014*.

While the labour force participation rate of women in their twenties is higher than that of men in the same age group, there is a decline in participation among women in their thirties. This means 300,000 women aged 30-39 are quitting jobs due to new responsibilities arising from childbirth and childcare.<sup>23</sup> Nearly 27.7% of the female workforce works part-time, compared to an average of 12.5% in the 22 OECD countries for which data is available.

Investing in women's economic integration is one of the highest return-on-investment opportunities for the Republic of Korea. According to the ILO-IMF-OECD-WB,<sup>24</sup> greater female labour supply would add impetus to economic growth: a full convergence in the participation rate between men and women over 20 years could boost the GDP per capita growth rate, with increases of more than 0.5 percentage points. Further research on the topic has also demonstrated that narrowing the gender employment gap in the N-11<sup>25</sup> countries can provide a substantial boost to per capita income by more than 10% and GDP growth by about

0.8% a year on average.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, according to the Korea Economic Research Institute, while the population of the Republic of Korea is currently growing, it is widely expected to begin decreasing in the coming years due to the low birth rate (1.19 births per woman in 2013). Closing the gender gap is thus even more of a priority.

Park Geun-hye, the nation's first female president, has pledged to lift the female employment rate from 53.5% to 61.9% by 2017. To enhance women's representation, the public sector is taking the lead by setting a target ratio of female managers. In 2014, the Ministry for Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) launched the "Lifecycle Career Support Strategy for Working Women" to create a society where women are no longer forced to interrupt their careers when they have children, and to provide a solid foundation for women's work-life balance. Companies with more than 500 workers or 300 female workers are expected to provide access to a childcare centre near the workplace. Currently, only about 40% do so, while the target is 70% by 2017. Additionally, the government will identify companies with low female employment levels and policy steps will include increased subsidies for parents on childcare leave and preferential treatment for "family-friendly" companies seeking government contracts.

<sup>26</sup> Goldman Sachs, "How closing the credit gap for women-owned SMEs can drive global growth", 2014, <http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/investing-in-women/gmi-report-pdf.pdf>

### Key Figures

- Part-time employment (female, male): 14.7, 6.7
- Average minutes spent per day on unpaid work (female, male): 227, 45
- Share of women on boards of listed companies: n/a
- Workers in informal sector (female, male) n/a
- Adult unemployment rate (female, male): 3.0, 3.4
- Percentage of tertiary-level STEM graduates (female, male) n/a
- Gross enrolment in tertiary education (female, male): 84, 111
- Ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership: 120th out of 131 countries

Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index*, 2014.

***"Improving gender parity is the way to improve our national competitiveness and sustainable growth. True gender equality can be achieved based on the work-family balance of both men and women."***

Kim Hee-Jung, Minister of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea

<sup>21</sup> International Labour Office (ILO), *ILOSTAT Database*, 2015. <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata>

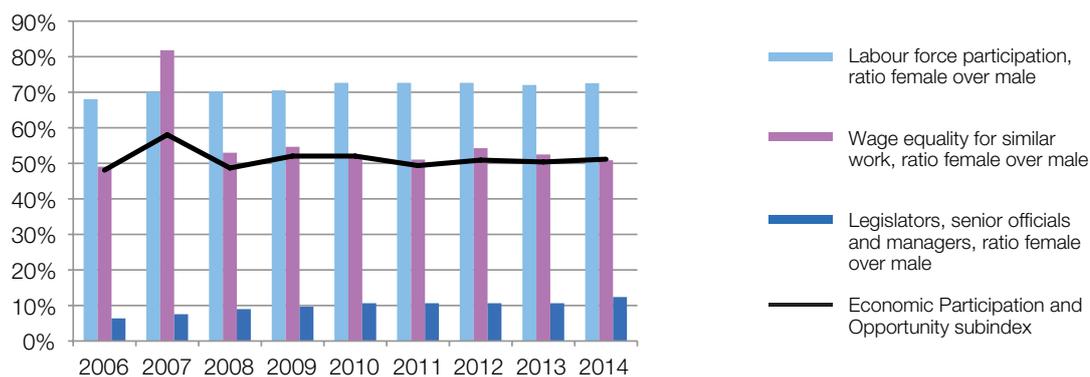
<sup>22</sup> [http://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey%20Offices/Japan/PDF/Women\\_Matter\\_An\\_Asian\\_perspective.ashx](http://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey%20Offices/Japan/PDF/Women_Matter_An_Asian_perspective.ashx)

<sup>23</sup> Yoon-sun, Cho, "How Korea's government is tackling the gender gap", World Economic Forum, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> ILO-IMF-OECD-WBG, Achieving stronger growth by promoting a more gender balanced economy, G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting, 2014. <http://www.oecd.org/g20/topics/employment-and-social-policy/ILO-IMF-OECD-WBG-Achieving-stronger-growth-by-promoting-a-more-gender-balanced-economy-G20.pdf>

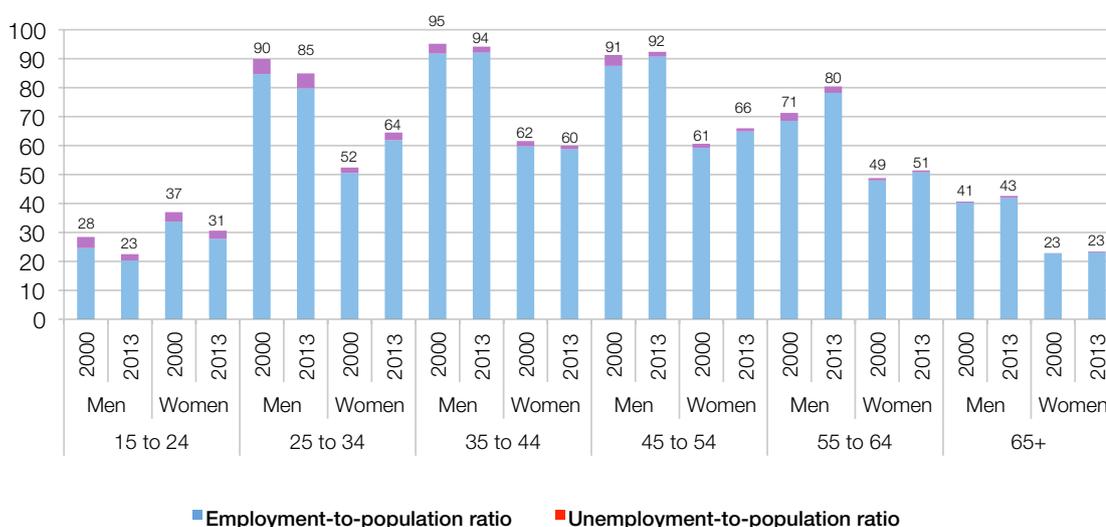
<sup>25</sup> The N-11 are emerging economies that Goldman Sachs has identified as having high growth potential over the coming decades, such as, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Turkey, Republic of Korea and Vietnam.

**Figure 9:** Trends of the economic participation and opportunity sub-index and its variables in Republic of Korea, 2006-2014



Source: *The Global Gender Gap Index*, 2014.

**Figure 10:** Labour force participation in the Republic of Korea by age and sex, 2000-2013



Source: *International Labour Office (ILO), ILOSTAT Database*, 2015, <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata>.

### Taskforce at a glance

The Korea Gender Parity Taskforce, locally named “Taskforce on Gender Parity and Empowerment of Women”, is the country’s first public-private collaboration established to promote gender equality, launched mid-2014 under the leadership of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the Korea Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The initiative gathers 100 of the largest employers of the country including 30 major conglomerates and accounting for more than 5.6 million employees. The taskforce includes expert institutions already focusing on gender parity such as MOGEF, the Korean National Council of Women, The Korean Women’s Association United and the Korean Women’s Development Institute. Two working groups, one of working-level group and the Board of Directors have been established.

In the initial phase of the taskforce, an analysis of the status quo revealed key intervention areas and initiatives were created to address these areas. The use of pre-existing work-life balance systems, the prevention of female career interruptions, re-employment opportunities and fostering a culture of gender equality within organizations were among the most commonly selected issues to tackle.

Members committed to relevant action plans to be implemented over the three years’ process, and topical seminars and working-level events, offer opportunities for best practice exchange, networking and help to keep up momentum. A guidebook of best practices on gender diversity and expert groups providing customized consulting support to members offer additional support for successful implementation, while encouraging companies’ autonomy and ownership of the implementation of action plans. At the Taskforce Annual Forum, members report on progress in performance. Similar to other taskforces, the public profiling of the issue and a spotlight on members’ commitments have been critical for sustaining momentum and will continue to be so in the remaining two years of this taskforce’s lifecycle.

A regularly updated website both in English and Korean (<http://genderparity.go.kr/en>) is available for public consultation.

# Conclusion

While the taskforces have not yet completed their terms, some lessons have emerged from these unique experiments that point to potential models for other countries to follow.

First, it is critical that the rationale for gender parity is clearly developed and articulated as part of any national process to close economic gender gaps. For example, in Japan, as in many ageing economies, as labour forces shrink and talent shortages emerge, women's integration into the labour force is key to promoting dynamism. This rationale has been clearly articulated by and to government and business leaders, creating the necessary consensus for change.

Second, long-term strategies to address gender diversity should be designed to withstand political cycles or business investment horizons. For example, since the initiation of the taskforces, all four countries experienced changes in political leadership. The fact that the activities were carried forward successfully in most countries despite changes to some of the original leadership can be attributed to the taskforces being anchored in business and government administrations more broadly.

Third, a common starting point and common vision is critical in ensuring the commitment of key actors. For example, Mexico was the first taskforce country in which a status quo assessment of taskforce member companies was executed. Using this information as a basis can help to ensure that commitments are targeted towards identified challenges. Mutual accountability, knowledge sharing and best-practice exchange between companies helps companies adopt the right measures and practices to ensure progress. In addition to wider national analysis, industry-specific analysis is also needed to accelerate impact.

Fourth, a highly structured, metrics-based approach for the implementation of commitments and tracking progress are also key factors in ensuring continued mobilization, sustained momentum and the sharing of best practices. While the initiative is in its first year of existence, the Republic of Korea is already an example where strong leadership by the government has accelerated the mobilization of the business community and commitment collection in an effective way. In addition to the government's strong guidance in the process, real ownership by the business community to implement commitments has also proven to be critical. In addition to individual company commitments, agreement on collective action helps to multiply impact.

Fifth, beyond political and business leadership, the engagement of media, academic experts and civil society representatives helps to ensure transparency and success in this transformation process. In Turkey, the establishment of a broadened leadership base has been helpful in creating transparency, building trust and a positive momentum for accountability.

In addition to these preliminary findings, more detailed results of the insights, challenges and lessons from the taskforces will be released after the completion of the first three pilot country taskforces intended lifecycle at the end of 2015 (and 2017 for the Republic of Korea).

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## In the country taskforces:

### Japan

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**Yoko Ishikura**, Professor Emeritus, Hitotsubashi University, Japan

**Kathy Koll Matsui**, Vice-Chair and Co-Head, Macro Research Asia, Goldman Sachs, Japan

### Republic of Korea

**Kim Hee-Jung**, Minister of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea (co-chair)

**Park Yong-Maan**, Chairman, Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Republic of Korea (co-chair)

**Lee Ki-soon**, General Manager, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea

**Park Hyung-seo**, Executive Director, Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Republic of Korea

**Choi Sung-ji**, Director, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea

**Hwang Woo-jeong**, Deputy Director, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea

**Im Soo-yeon**, Task Force on Gender parity and Empowerment of Women, Ministry of Gender Equality & Family, Republic of Korea

**Kim Hee**, Korean Women's Development Institute, Republic of Korea

### Mexico

**Carlos Danel**, Chairman, Gentera, Mexico (co-chair)

**Angelica Fuentes**, Chief Executive Officer, Omnilife, and Founder, Angelissima, Mexico (co-chair)

**Lelis Quintanilla**, Director, Business Development, Omnilife-Angelissima Group, Mexico

**Ana Castillo Keller**, Public Relations, Gentera, Mexico

**Carolina Velazco Bernal**, International Relations, Compartamos, Mexico

**Ximena Toledo**, Chief of Staff, Omnilife-Angelissima Group, Mexico

**Ana Ochoa**, Business Development Coordinator, Omnilife

### Turkey

**Ayşenur İslam**, Minister of Family and Social Policies of Turkey (co-chair)

**Güler Sabancı**, Chairman and Managing Director, Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding, Turkey (co-chair)

**Ferit Sahenk**, Chairman, Doğuş Group, Turkey (co-chair)

**Banu Yıldız**, Vice-President, Ministry of Family and Social Policies, General Directorate of Women's Status

**Ozlem Denizmen**, Head, Social Investments, Dogus Group, Turkey

**Neriman Ulsever**, Group President, Human Resources, Sabancı Holding, Turkey

**Leyla Gönül Gürbüz**, Project Specialist, Doğuş Group

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**Paulina Padilla Ugarte**, Team Coordinator, Gender Parity Programme

**Pearl Samandari Massoudi**, Senior Manager, Gender Parity Programme

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World Economic Forum  
91–93 route de la Capite  
CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva  
Switzerland

Tel.: +41 (0) 22 869 1212  
Fax: +41 (0) 22 786 2744

[contact@weforum.org](mailto:contact@weforum.org)  
[www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)