

CHAPTER 5:
INSTITUTIONS FOR
GENDER EQUALITY

5.1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 of the 2030 Agenda calls for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Gender equality is a standalone Goal and is integral to achieving all the SDGs. Conversely, progress on other SDGs impacts gender equality outcomes.

Governments make commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women through the adoption of global agreements, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). These are translated into constitutions, anti-discrimination legislation and policies, plans and strategies, including gender action plans and strategies.

Even as women and girls have gained ground in terms of rights and participation in social, political and economic life, they are still disproportionately impacted by inequality, discriminatory norms and social practices. Inequality continues to deprive women of basic rights and opportunities, including¹ access to basic services, ownership or control of productive resources such as land, and labor market opportunities. In about 90 countries, women spend roughly three times as many hours in unpaid domestic and care work as men.² It has also been estimated that, globally, 2.5 billion women have weaker legal rights than men and 723 million women and girls are victims of gender-based violence.³

Governments have a key role in accelerating progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. They can enact laws and implement policies to eliminate structural barriers to gender equality and foster economic and social development. Governments can also promote transparency and access to information to unveil barriers to equality and enable women to act based on the knowledge of their rights. They can stem or prevent corrupt practices that constrain women's access to public services and introduce accountability mechanisms to engage women and girls in decisions that affect their lives. The array of instruments that governments have used to foster gender equality is vast, and ranges from constitutional and legal approaches to regulatory frameworks to reform within organizations to the use of instruments such as gender-responsive planning and budgeting to broader attempts at shifting social norms.

This chapter analyses how public institutions can promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It documents various institutional mechanisms, tools and instruments used by countries to this end. The chapter is not exhaustive but rather examines how institutional principles of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (non-discrimination, accountability, anti-corruption, transparency and participation) have informed the design and implementation of various

institutional arrangements for advancing gender equality. As noted in the introduction to this report, these principles do not by themselves suffice to define institutions that "work well" for society. Rather, they are used (together with other principles recalled in the 2030 Agenda such as leaving no one behind, concern for future generations, and balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions) to inform institutional approaches that aim to support societal goals – in the case of this chapter, the targets under SDG 5 as well as all other SDG targets that have a gender component.

The chapter is built as follows. Section 5.2 looks at gender-responsive institutions at the national level. Section 5.3 examines six SDG targets that have strong gender components through the lens of institutional principles of SDG 16. Section 5.4 provides key messages in relation to institutions for gender equality and empowerment.

5.2. Gender-responsive institutions at the national level

This section addresses institutional mechanisms and approaches to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at the national level, through the lens of the institutional principles of SDG16: non-discriminatory laws and policies; access to information and transparency; accountability; anti-corruption; and inclusive and participatory decision making.

5.2.1. Gender mainstreaming and institutional mechanisms

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) identified national machineries for the advancement of women⁴ as critical for gender equality. It called for these to be located at the highest level of government, to be adequately resourced, and to influence the development of all government policies.⁵ As of 2015, 193 countries had established institutional mechanisms⁶ with the core mandate to coordinate, facilitate and monitor government policies on gender equality and women's empowerment. The 2030 Agenda reaffirms the role of these national mechanisms and commits to strengthening gender equality institutions at national, regional and global levels.⁷

Several assessments of national mechanisms have identified a lack of human and financial resources that limit their ability to fulfil their mandate.⁸ As of 2014, 28 European Union Member States had established governmental gender equality bodies, however no substantial progress had been observed in relation to their mandate.⁹ Similarly, in Africa,¹⁰ Latin America and the Caribbean, South-East and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and Western Asia¹¹, resource constraints negatively affect institutional and programmatic stability and have a bearing on the performance, internal capacities and efficiency of these mechanisms to carry out their mandate¹² (Box 5.1).

Box 5.1. National mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean

According to ECLAC's Division for Gender Affairs, the establishment of the mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls has been uneven in the Latin American and the Caribbean region. Their institutional level varies from one country to another and the progress made has been accompanied by setbacks, often depending on changes in national administration. Some mechanisms have been established by law and others by presidential decree, giving them differing levels of political and social legitimacy. Analyses of these institutions indicate that their power to propose and develop public policy is closely related to their position in the executive branch and budgetary allocation.

The hierarchical level achieved by these mechanisms affects the mainstreaming of policies that need the entire array of stakeholders to be implemented efficiently and successfully. Their position in the State's organizational structure shapes the agency's ability to engage different public agencies and affects a mechanism's negotiating power in terms of decision-making.

As of July 2018, in Latin America, for 50% of the mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the head of those institutions held ministerial rank; 25% were accountable to a ministry; and 25% were attached to the Office of the President or reported directly to it. In the Caribbean, most mechanisms (84%) are were accountable to a ministry¹³.

Source: ECLAC, contribution to the World Public Sector Report 2019.

Despite these challenges, national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have spearheaded the development of action plans on gender equality, ending violence against women, peace and security as well as coordinated gender mainstreaming in national development plans. They have provided analysis and assessment, capacity development and training, and demanded action for deeper institutionalization of gender mainstreaming. National mechanisms have been successful in mobilizing political will and facilitating institutional change for more gender responsive public sector.¹⁴ They engage a wide spectrum of institutional stakeholders at national and subnational levels and collaborate with a range of partners to fulfill their mandates.¹⁵ Through mainstreaming gender in sectoral ministries and public agencies, they serve to transform public policy values and the behavior of public institutions.¹⁶

While public administration is the central instrument for the implementation of SDGs and national policies and programmes, gender mainstreaming enables countries to undertake the institutional reforms needed to reorient public policies towards gender equality. Gender mainstreaming has been promoted through equality plans that chart responsibilities across different sectors and arms of government, making equality targets parts of sectoral goals. Mexico, for example, has made strides in strengthening its approach to gender equality by developing laws, policies and programmes requiring gender equality to be part of all government action. The National Development Plan calls for the "gender perspective" to be integrated in all public policies as part of a "transversal strategy" that applies across all departments of federal and state government. As a corollary to the 2013-18 National Development Plan, Mexico adopted its National Programme for Equality and Non-Discrimination. However, despite the robust legal and regulatory framework,

and the commitment of ministries to implementing the National Programme, solid gender analyses are not always conducted as part of the policy cycle.¹⁷

Public institutions in several countries have implemented institutional reforms to promote gender mainstreaming. For example, in 2018 the General Police Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moldova carried out a self-assessment using a benchmarking framework.¹⁸ The existence of a gender responsive management framework, mechanisms to design, monitor and implement gender policies and laws, as well as the appropriate level of funding allocated to gender equality, were among the key assessed areas. Based on the assessment, the Inspectorate identified areas for improvement, including the need for a gender analysis of the Inspectorate's budget.

Inter-ministerial task forces and other coordination bodies can spearhead and coordinate the work of national mechanisms to mainstream gender across government by supporting opportunities for the exchange of information, experience and good practices as well as coordinated action. In Brazil in the first decade of the 21st century, the national mechanism for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls coordinated representatives from women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia and research institutes, and a wide variety of wider civil society, to participate together with governmental representatives in councils and commissions created for drafting legislation, preparing national action plans and monitoring activities.¹⁹ This approach has been credited by UN Women with multiple benefits, including *"generating substantive ideas for the elaboration of national plans that truly respond to women's needs and aspirations, building the capacity and power of civil society, and contributed to greater transparency in governmental action."*²⁰

Mainstreaming gender equality across all government agencies presents challenges, even in countries with a long history of promoting gender equality at the highest level and dedicating significant resources to this endeavor (Box 5.2).

Strong engagement between national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and civil society can enhance knowledge sharing, capacity development and accountability for gender mainstreaming. Civil society, particularly women's organizations, gender advocates and political champions can also influence policymaking. National mechanisms bring together civil society organizations, researchers and government institutions to engage in policy and legislative drafting processes as well as efforts to establish multi-stakeholder steering committees on sectoral or thematic issues.

The establishment of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the highest possible level of government, particularly under the responsibility of a cabinet minister or located within the Office of the President, together with the development of gender equality laws and national gender strategies and action plans, provide the overall framework for guiding and institutionalizing gender equality. The political will to achieve gender equality is reflected in the level of political and decision-making authority vested in these national mechanisms, and in the clear mandates as well as adequate human and financial resource allocations that are commensurate with their requirements and expectations. Strategic alliances, partnerships and collaborations with civil society and other stakeholders are also important for mobilizing political will and increasing the public's understanding of national gender equality agendas.

5.2.2. Non-discrimination: Gender equality laws and policies

Discriminatory laws persist across the world despite a significant body of research highlighting the negative impact of laws that directly and indirectly discriminate against women and girls. As of 2016, an estimated 90 per cent of countries had at least one discriminatory law in their legal frameworks.²² Discrimination in law may include different standards for women and men in applying for a passport, choosing employment, transferring nationality to a child or foreign spouse, participating in court proceedings, receiving inheritance and deciding when and whom to marry. Several countries also lack laws to protect women and girls from domestic violence, marital rape, sexual harassment, human trafficking and gender-related killing.²³ As a result, more than 2.5 billion women and girls globally are affected by discriminatory laws and lack of legal protections.²⁴

Governments have taken steps to repeal discriminatory laws and adopt laws that address women's and girls' needs. For example, in the economic sphere the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2018 report captures 87 changes towards legal gender equality across 65 countries since 2016. These include lifting prohibitions on women's ability to work in male dominated employment sectors such as mining, and enabling women to open a bank account and register a business.²⁵

Governments have also adopted gender-responsive legislation and policy frameworks to address gender-based violence from a holistic perspective. In Tunisia, in addition to a constitutional provision, violence against women is addressed by a national law from 2017 that eliminated a loophole allowing rapists to avoid jail by marrying their victims, and introduced a national strategy for implementation.²⁶ Legislation in Benin addresses

Box 5.2. Challenges to mainstreaming gender equality in government's work: the case of Sweden

Sweden is widely considered as one of the most advanced countries in terms of achieving gender equality. Since 1994, gender mainstreaming has been the main strategy for implementing gender equality policies in the country, meaning that work to achieve the gender equality policy objectives should be conducted within all policy areas. During the period 2007-2014, the government set aside SEK 2.6 billion (around USD 300 million) for a society-wide gender equality initiative, with resources allocated to projects led by about 50 government agencies, municipalities and county councils, and non-profit organizations. In 2015, Sweden's National Audit Office published an audit of the initiative. The audit found that while the massive injection of resources had raised the legitimacy of gender equality as a policy objective, the delivery of the initiative had faced several challenges. The audit found that the choice of measures and projects supported by the initiative was insufficiently informed by the government's gender mainstreaming strategy. Many projects were insufficiently integrated into government agencies' regular planning and other administrative processes, putting their sustainability at risk. The audit noted that officials in government agencies could have been better prepared and trained on gender mainstreaming before resources were released for projects under the initiative. The audit pointed that, as the initiative unfolded, the legal framework governing the relationship of government agencies had changed and that under the new regime, gender equality mandates have not been systematically included in the remit of all agencies. Lastly, the audit also found that the Government had not sufficiently used data and information produced through the initiative to draw lessons that could inform future gender equality policies. The audit recommended the creation of an institutional structure to strengthen the country's gender mainstreaming strategy.

Source: Sweden's national audit office.²¹

violence against women through provisions for investigation, prosecution, punishment of perpetrators and protection and support services for survivors.²⁷ Swiss law holds cantons responsible for establishing counselling centres to offer support to victims and training personnel and police to be responsive to victims of domestic violence.²⁸ In China, a Civil Code on sexual harassment in the workplace will come into force in 2020. In Lebanon, repeal of an article in the penal code and drafting of a new law²⁹ both aim to increase legislative protections for those who experience gender-based violence. (See box 5.3).

Furthermore, a growing number of countries have enacted or reformed legislation to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 and to introduce punitive measures for non-compliance³⁰ and female genital mutilation.³¹ Approaches to end harmful practices have engaged indigenous communities in Latin America, local community and religious leaders in Africa and migrants in Europe in implementing strengthened laws and attitudinal change programmes. However, challenges remain regarding law enforcement and ineffective implementation of policies and interventions, particularly when legal reform is not supported by awareness-raising, prevention efforts, the provision of services and adequate funding.³²

Some countries have introduced a comprehensive set of legislation. For example, the Equality Law of Spain, adopted in 2007, established mandatory actions and policies, such as the Strategic Equal Opportunities Plans, the creation of an Inter-Ministerial Commission on Equality, the inclusion of gender impact reports for every law or national plan, as well as regular reports on the effectiveness of the law. The law also focused on the promotion of women, in terms of effective equality for women and men in all aspects of the media and the presence of women on corporate governing boards.³³ The Law focuses

on the right to work, the right to political participation and the right to accede to and pursue a career in the public sector. The number of women elected steadily increased through legal provisions which oblige political parties to include at least 40 per cent of women on every list for every election.³⁴

SDG Indicator 5.1.1, defined as ‘whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex’, seeks to establish global data on legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality. The indicator measures progress in four areas: overarching legal frameworks and public life; violence against women; employment and economic benefits; and marriage and family. Preliminary data suggests that despite progress on legal reform, gaps in legal protection for women remain in all areas.

Strong public sector institutions working in a coordinated manner, including parliaments, law reform commissions and ministries of justice, are key for developing robust frameworks to advance gender equality.³⁵ Despite some progress in addressing gaps in legal protections afforded to women, studies across the globe show that justice institutions are not fully responding to the needs of women and girls.³⁶ The lack of gender parity in justice institutions has been identified as a critical gap in this regard. In some contexts, the increased presence of women in law and order and judicial institutions has contributed to greater reporting of sexual assault, to creating more conducive environments for women in courts and to positive changes in the outcomes of sexual violence cases.³⁷ In Liberia, for instance, after an all-women police unit was deployed by the UN mission in 2007, recruitment of women into the police force increased, which contributed to a rise in reporting of gender-based violence. This shows the importance of ensuring

Box 5.3. Penal code legislation in Lebanon

In 2017, a nationwide campaign by the ABAAD Resource Centre for Gender Equality contributed to the abolition of Article 522 of the Lebanese Penal code, which allowed men who had been convicted of sexual assault, abduction, or statutory rape against a woman to avoid a penalty of no less than five years of hard labour if a valid contract of marriage could be provided. This campaign, which was supported by the Minister for Women’s Affairs, mobilized public awareness to spur social norms change to adequately respond to sexual violence. Besides the repeal of Article 522, the campaign led to:

- Enhanced coordination mechanisms between humanitarian actors, local service providers and government agencies (such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities) to coordinate and strengthen prevention and response instruments for sexual and gender-based violence. National Standard Operating Procedures were developed to guide local and national organizations and bodies working in this domain in Lebanon.
- Increase in the quality of services, in particular clinical care for sexual violence, and access to safe spaces.
- Change in attitude and perceptions, which resulted in an increase in the number of survivors seeking help.

One of the key lessons learned is the importance of effective collaboration and partnership among national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, government agencies as well as civil society.

Source: ABAAD, contribution to the World Public Sector Report.

gender parity across the justice chain by increasing the number of female judges, police, prosecutors and other front-line justice sector officials, especially at the decision-making level.³⁸

Women's participation in legal reform processes has contributed to the inclusion of specific provisions in constitutions and laws enhancing responsiveness to the needs of women and preventing discrimination, harassment and violence. Such participation has enabled justice institutions and women themselves to pursue appropriate remedies. For example, women's groups encouraged and supported Morocco's National Human Rights Council to challenge Moroccan inheritance law and ensure equality before the law for women and girls. In Northern Ireland, the participation of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition is credited with the inclusion of both women-specific and violence survivor-specific provisions in the final text of the 1990s Good Friday Agreement.³⁹ In South Africa, the National Strategic Plan for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV and AIDS 2007-2011 included recommendations made by women's rights groups and activists from different sectors, making it more inclusive of and responsive to women's realities, needs and risks.⁴⁰

5.2.3. Transparency and access to information

Transparency and access to information are essential for women and women's organizations to "scrutinize the quality of public services and policy decisions that affect their lives".⁴¹ Fiscal and budget transparency have been critical not only to track expenditures for gender equality; they have also spurred positive changes in broader policies and efforts focused on the right to information. In India, the fight of women's organizations for establishing the right to access information about public budgets and public spending led to a movement that successfully fought for the Constitutional amendment that created the Right to Information Law in the country.⁴² The Group of Women in Parliament from El Salvador and the Legal Commission for Women Equity of Colombia have promoted transparency to make agendas and achievements on legislation and actions for the promotion of gender equality publicly accessible through the government website.⁴³

Public reporting has also helped governments to enhance transparency by tracking and sharing information on public spending on gender issues. Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Puerto Rico systematically report public spending on gender equality issues.⁴⁴ Public reporting has allowed women's groups and other stakeholders to monitor whether funds have been allocated to promote national gender equality priorities. However, more concerted efforts are needed to continue to strengthen transparency of budget information. In 2016, data reported by 81 countries showed that while 72 per cent of those had systems to track gender resource allocations, only 47 per cent were making this data publicly available.⁴⁵

Not all efforts to enhance transparency and promote access to information have been successful or have achieved the intended results. This is often due to education, cultural and other socio-economic barriers that prevent women and grassroots organizations from reaping the benefits of enhanced transparency. Thus, in many contexts, the success of transparency frameworks is linked to the coexistence of other policy instruments that promote gender equality. Such frameworks have a greater impact when they are part of and are supported by a broader and coherent institutional gender-responsive agenda.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have helped to boost transparency and access to information. ICT-based information management systems facilitate the retrieval and analysis of information, including sex-disaggregated data. Yet, open data initiatives by governments and civil society have often overlooked how data, for example on health and crime, can be made publicly available and used to meet the needs of women and girls.⁴⁶

Access to information has also benefited from advances in the generation and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics in the past two decades, with approximately 105 countries reporting to be monitoring and collecting national gender statistics.⁴⁷ Some countries have established national gender equality observatories and gender teams at the local and national levels that lead the collection of statistics disaggregated by sex and develop national gender indicators. National data collection has also focused on collecting information about specific groups, such as rural women, women with disabilities and women living with HIV.⁴⁸

Although many countries have endeavoured to strengthen national collection and use of gender statistics, the lack of resources and technical capacity creates gaps in the availability of existing indicators and data to capture gender equality and women's rights for different demographic and social groups. Global, regional and national monitoring frameworks need to adapt to produce robust and integrated evidence bases of policy and programmatic lessons that can spur progress, support advocacy and promote accountability for gender equality. Monitoring of strategic gender indicators through the UN Minimum Set of Gender Indicators, identified by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and adopted by the UN Statistical Commission as a guide for national production and international compilation of gender statistics⁴⁹ as well as through observatories such as the Observatory on Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean has helped to measure progress towards the achievement of SDG 5 and other SDGs.⁵⁰

Box 5.4. Initiatives to support enhanced production and use of gender statistics

Several important initiatives such as the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project by the United Nations Statistics Division and UN Women, the STEM and Gender Advancement (SAGA) project by UNESCO-UIS and more recently Data2X, Equal Measures 2030 and UN Women's Making Every Woman and Girl Count flagship programme initiative have been developed to help address these challenges. Many of these initiatives are designed to provide direct technical and financial support to countries, based on priorities that recipient countries have identified. UN Women's Making Every Woman and Girl Count programme seeks to bring about a radical shift in how gender statistics are used, created and promoted at the global, regional and country level. The programme supports 12 countries in three broad areas by: (1) helping to promote a supportive policy environment to prioritize gender data and effective monitoring of the SDGs; (2) supporting efforts to improve the regular production of gender statistics, including building the technical capacity of the national statistical systems and providing financial support to improve data collection; and (3) improving access to data to inform policy advocacy through solutions such as open access, dissemination tools, and user-producer dialogues.⁵¹

Source: UN Women, 2018.

5.2.4. Accountability

Accountability of governance institutions to the public is critical for effective implementation of the SDGs. A well-functioning public sector should support gender equality as a standard against which public sector performance is assessed and measured.⁵² One such approach, gender-responsive budgeting, allows fiscal authorities to structure tax and spending policies to promote gender equality and foster accountability (see chapter 3 for a discussion of gender budgeting in the context of addressing discrimination). It uses a range of analytical tools to assess budget performance against stated gender equality objectives. Gender budgeting identifies critical gender gaps and produces data on the potential impact of policies and programmes on women and men. Such analysis supports the targeting of available resources to address gender inequalities, improving the efficiency and equity of the overall budget process.

Gender budgeting strengthens systems of accountability by linking public spending with the achievement of gender objectives. It supports legislative and policy implementation, and strengthens systems for tracking gaps between budget allocations and actual expenditures. More than 100 countries have implemented some form of gender budgeting to date, and evidence has emerged on its contribution to positive impacts for women and girls. For example, since 2003, countries with gender budgeting have made more progress on the Gender Development Index, a measure of overall gender equality, than countries without gender budgeting. In India, states with gender budgeting efforts have made more progress on gender equality in primary school enrolment than states without.⁵³

At the institutional level, ministries of finance and economy are the main drivers of gender budgeting. They set guidelines and instructions in the form of budget statements or call circulars and approve budget proposals. Successful gender budgeting has built in accountability mechanisms across the planning

and budgeting cycle (see box 5.5) and hinges on effective coordination across the range of institutional actors.

National mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls can ensure a coordinated, integrated approach by mainstreaming gender across the planning and budgeting cycle and bringing in critical actors like Parliaments and civil society. In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Finance leads gender responsive budgeting efforts in close coordination with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, which creates a strong accountability mechanism to monitor results.⁵⁴

Accountability mechanisms such as gender budget committees or gender working groups can facilitate coordination across ministries and can facilitate the engagement of sector ministries national mechanisms, Parliaments and civil society. In Nepal, a committee including ministries of finance and sector ministries coordinates sectoral gender budgeting efforts across the whole of government. In Serbia, a coalition of government ministries, parliament and women's organizations work together to include gender in the budget objectives and programmes of 47 government institutions.⁵⁵ In Morocco, strong institutional coordination, coupled with political will, resulted in the adoption of the 2015 Organic Budget Law which requires that all budget processes define objectives and measure performance on gender allocations and expenditure.

Active engagement of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in assessing government plans, policies and budgets can contribute to better services delivery outcomes for women and girls, especially at the local level. For example, in Tajikistan, District Task Forces established throughout the country and covered by the public budget provided free legal aid to over 11,000 people in 2013, among which 77 percent were women.⁵⁶

Box 5.5. Gender-budgeting tools at different stages of the budget cycle

Formulation stage: Most of the mechanisms adopted by countries are concentrated at this stage of the cycle. Some of the more common mechanisms include: incorporating instructions to report on gender into budget call circulars; gender budget statements; and gender-related provision in budget or planning documents.

Legislative/enactment stage: This is the stage when the budget is submitted to the parliament for debate, questioning and enactment. This stage provides several entry points for gender responsive budgeting, including raising gender concerns through parliamentary questions and debates, modification of parliamentary rules, and introduction of mechanisms such as a Women's Caucus to ensure gender equality concerns are discussed and debated.

Implementation stage: This is the stage when expenditure and performance can be monitored through short-term reports. Ensuring sex-disaggregated data is collected and reported in the mid-year/in-year reports can be a useful mechanism at this stage to ensure that funds are being spent as per allocation, that there is no under-spending, and that the short-term deliverables or outputs are being achieved as per the gender action plan.

Audit stage: Centre-staging gender in public audits ensures that the interrogation is not purely at the level of allocations. Institutional mechanisms at the audit stage can include introducing gender analysis/gender markers into the formal audit process.

Source: UN Women, 2016. Gender Responsive Budgeting in Asia Pacific Region: A Status Report.

Multi-stakeholder approaches have been particularly effective in creating space for civil society engagement. In Rwanda, the active and consistent engagement of the Rwandan Women's Parliamentary Group was critical for advancing gender budgeting and increasing investments in education and health services for women and girls. Further, gender assessments conducted by independent oversight agencies and civil society can improve resource tracking and delivery of gender responsive services.⁵⁷

Audits, both at the strategic level of government policy and at the level of individual programmes and entities, support gender mainstreaming. Audits of public service delivery programmes done by supreme audit institutions, including social audits, have proven useful in monitoring public spending and exposing corruption in service delivery, as analysed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this report. At the policy level, supreme audit institutions can assess how governments deliver on their gender commitments. This is done both by assessing the performance of individual institutions, and by examining performance against national indicators and relating those to actions taken by the government in the area of gender equality. In the Latin America region, three supreme audit institutions (Chile, Costa Rica and Puerto Rico) conducted a coordinated audit on gender equality in 2014.⁵⁸ The coordinated audit examined specific programmes and functions related to gender equality at the national level, and developed a common Gender Equity Index with a number of comparable indicators linked with education, health and employment to assess progress in the three countries over the period 2009-13. The lessons learned from the audit have informed ongoing work by supreme audit institutions around the world to audit the implementation of the SDGs, including

a coordinated audit on the preparation of governments to implement SDG 5 in Latin America.⁵⁹ Specific guidance on how to audit gender equality in the context of the SDGs has also been developed to support the auditors' work in auditing SDG 5 or examining gender equality in other SDG areas.⁶⁰

Studies show that women's presence influences institutional performance. For example, parliaments with greater numbers of women have been found to perform oversight functions more effectively, and public perceptions of parliament may be more positive when more women are represented.⁶¹ Women's participation in oversight bodies has been found to strengthen the gender-responsiveness of public accountability institutions.⁶²

Lack of capacity among civil society actors, lack of transparency on public finances, and ineffective audit mechanisms can weaken gender-responsive budgeting efforts. Audit institutions should have mechanisms with "teeth" to ensure that approved budget allocations are executed as planned. In South Korea, in line with the National Finance Law, gender audit performance reports are prepared annually and submitted to the national audit board, enabling evaluation of the impact of the budget on women and men.⁶³ Uganda issues gender and equity certificates to all government entities that meet the gender requirement in their annual budget proposals. Entities that fail to do so do not obtain the certificate and must resubmit proposals.⁶⁴

A key innovation in recent years is the development of budget tracking systems that generate real time data allowing efficient and transparent monitoring of allocations. In 2012 in Ecuador,

the Ministry of Finance began implementing a public online budget execution tracking system to provide a comprehensive inventory of gender projects and budget allocations. Tracking budget allocations and making data public is a critical dimension of fiscal transparency and accountability. SDG Indicator 5.c.1 seeks to assess whether a tracking system is in place and whether budget data is made available to the public in a timely, accessible and user-friendly manner. Preliminary analysis has found that countries are developing tracking systems but are not sufficiently assessing the outcome and impact of budget allocations.⁶⁵

5.2.5. Anti-corruption

Men and women perceive, experience and are impacted by corruption differently.⁶⁶ The definition of corruption as “misuse of entrusted power for private gain” does not cover the full extent of women’s experiences with corruption.⁶⁷ Some common forms of corruption affecting women, such as sextortion, are often excluded from legal definitions and under-addressed by anti-corruption efforts. Anticorruption measures should acknowledge these forms of corruption and provide mitigating responses.⁶⁸

Gendered impact of corruption

Gender matters for understanding the negative consequences of corruption. There are areas with high corruption risks where women are the majority and become more exposed to corruption.⁶⁹ Women as primary caregivers are more likely than men to experience corruption in their daily interactions with public officials when accessing public services, for example in the health and the water and sanitation sectors.⁷⁰ The relationship between corruption and higher female

mortality rates has also been well documented. Research by Transparency International in 2014 revealed that the number of mothers dying during birth is higher in countries where there is a higher incidence of bribery.⁷¹

The evidence shows that the gendered impact of corruption is related to women’s disadvantages regarding societal gender roles, inequality and discrimination, which result in greater vulnerability to corruption.⁷² For instance, corruption in public procurement results in higher prices and lowers the quality of services. As women are likely to have less income, the relative impact is greater for them than for men.⁷³ Also, due to gender inequalities in access to labour markets, many women cannot afford to pay bribes for necessary basic services, which make them more likely victims of certain forms of corruption such as sexual extortion.⁷⁴ More directly, the diversion of funds in financial schemes set by governments to promote women’s economic empowerment negatively impacts women, as such funds may have been their only hope to access capital.⁷⁵

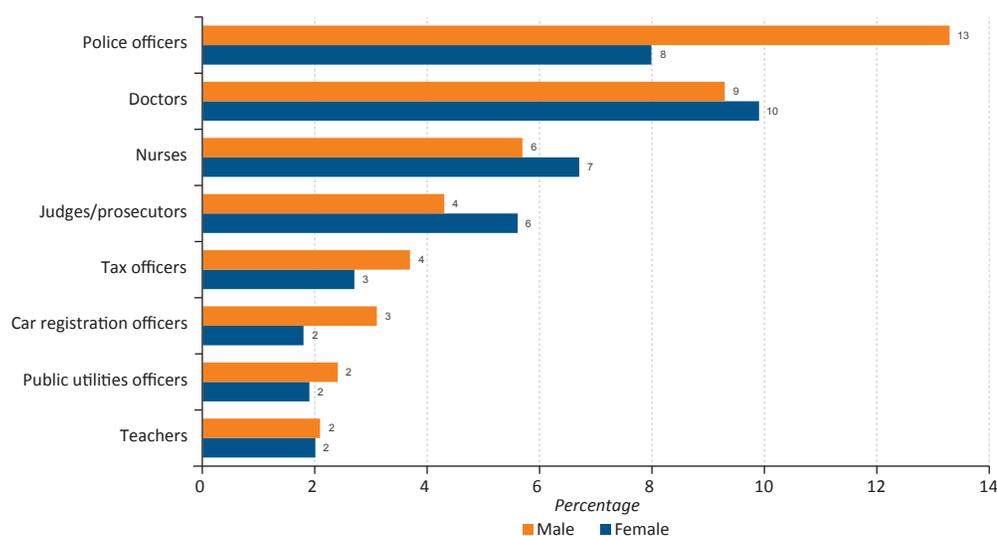
Moreover, the negative impacts of corruption contribute to perpetuating gender discrimination and inequality. Where corruption creates barriers for women to access safe water, for example, the time they spend in collecting water cannot be dedicated to other activities (such as study or income generation) that would contribute to empower women and address existing inequalities.⁷⁶

Gender statistics

A systematic analysis of gender differences in the experience and impact of corruption would help generate better gender-responsive anti-corruption policies. This could entail identifying sectors and procedures to which men and women have

Figure 5.1.

Prevalence of bribery by sex and by selected public officials, western Balkans



Source: UNODC, 2010.

different exposure, as well as different attitudes of men and women about accepting and reporting corruption.

Survey research suggests lower tolerance of women towards corruption in democratic settings.⁷⁷ In terms of accepting bribes, experimental research suggests that there are no differences between men and women, yet women are less likely to accept a bribe when there is a perceived risk of sanction. There are gender differences in offering bribes, as men are more likely to offer bribes. Both men and women tend to offer higher bribes to men.

Gender-differentiated patterns are observed in the interaction with public officials. Figure 5.1 offers an example of analysis of the prevalence of corruption by gender, based on interactions with public officials in the western Balkans.⁷⁸

According to surveys conducted by UNODC in Afghanistan, Nigeria and the western Balkans, among other countries, pressure to pay bribes is often experienced differently by male and female respondents. For example, men pay bribes significantly more often than women do when in contact with police officers in Nigeria and the western Balkans, but this is not the case in Afghanistan. On the other hand, women reported paying bribes more often than men when in contact with tax and revenue officials in Afghanistan, but not in the western Balkans and Nigeria.⁷⁹

Understanding the gendered impacts of corruption requires additional empirical evidence and research, as well as the collection of gender statistics on corruption and its impacts. The design of anticorruption interventions should rely on a better analysis of differences in gender exposure and vulnerability to corruption, while gender programmes would also benefit from integrating an anti-corruption perspective.⁸⁰ Moreover, monitoring should also capture the gender dynamics of corruption, recognising different manifestations of corruption that impact men and women differently, and gender-sensitizing corruption indicators and monitoring and oversight mechanisms of international and national instruments against corruption.⁸¹

Addressing the gender dimensions of corruption

Few anti-corruption policies have been oriented towards addressing in a systematic manner the forms of corruption that affect women the most.⁸³ The UNDP/ Huairou Commission study identifies several interventions to address gender-based corruption. These include: enacting gender responsive anti-corruption legislation; expanding the definition of corruption to include the range of women's experiences including physical and sexual abuse and abuse of power in relation to basic services; involving women in the development of national anti-corruption programmes and policies; having appropriate recourse measures and mechanisms; and creating spaces to report corruption such as women-led citizen monitoring groups, women's desks and anonymous reporting lines.⁸⁴

Other measures⁸⁵ that can be taken to mitigate the gendered impact of corruption and address corruption and gender inequality are awareness raising on the differential impact of corruption; collecting sex disaggregated data related to corruption; mainstreaming gender into anti-corruption programmes; providing capacity building and institutional support to women leaders; promoting gender responsive budgeting (see chapter 3 of this report); designing gender sensitive reporting mechanisms,⁸⁶ and integrating women in the labour force of public services. For example, the presence of women in public agencies that provide services and oversight bodies can help identify their priorities.⁸⁷

Promoting women's participation in public and political life is another way to address corruption and gender inequality. A recent cross-country study of 125 countries found a robust and negative causal connection between women's presence in parliament and local politics, and corruption.⁸⁸ Also, recent research for 20 EU countries confirms that female representation in locally elected assemblies contributes to reducing both petty and grand corruption.⁸⁹ As the share of females in locally elected councils increases, the level of both types of corruption decreases. These effects are differentiated across sectors. While female representation decreases the level of corruption

Box 5.6. Capturing the gender dimension of corruption: data needs

The gender dimension of corruption can be captured by collecting specific sex-disaggregated data, for instance, through sample surveys. This requires incorporating gender concerns and the gender perspective into the objectives of the survey and into the planning and design of the questionnaire. The ensuing step is to include gender-sensitive questions and disaggregating all relevant questions by sex (both for respondents and public officials). Before the survey is launched, interviewers and staff are to be trained on gender-related measurement issues and context-affected gender stereotypes. Gender diversity is also encouraged in the selection of interviewers.

Such a gender-responsive approach - followed in Indonesia by the "I am a woman against corruption" (Saya Perempuan Antikorupsi) movement led by the country's Corruption Eradication Commission - helped in collecting disaggregated corruption data that was then used to measure progress made on reducing corruption and bribery (SDG 16.5).

Source: see footnote.⁸²

in health and education, it has no effect on bribes paid to law enforcement agencies. However, research warns that women representatives are an heterogeneous group and these effects are not only related to representatives being women, but to their role as politicians and the anti-corruption agendas they support.

Women in many contexts often have limited access to information, which is essential to scrutinize the quality of public services and policy decisions. Therefore, practical measures to increase transparency, participation and accountability in public services and citizens' understanding of complex administrative procedures can help women avoid corruption. This includes simple measures such as posting outside of local government offices and service delivery centres the prices of public services such as the cost of getting a land title, a birth certificate, or hospital waiting lists, so that women cannot be asked for more than they should pay.⁹⁰ Other examples include providing information on how to apply for a subsidy, a low-income latrine or housing loan, so that women are not tricked into paying bribes or illegal fees that they should not pay. These measures should also consider how to better involve women in service delivery to avoid existing gender biases, implementing participatory monitoring of service delivery and increasing gender awareness and responsiveness of service delivery.⁹¹

Women participation in anti-corruption campaigns and advocacy can help advance systemic change by promoting legal changes, and working with partners to strengthen enforcement and implementation of reforms. Anti-corruption mobilization by women takes different forms. In some contexts, women have more difficulty demanding accountability and seeking redress for corruption.⁹² For example, women in Africa often face gender-specific impediments to engaging in anti-

corruption activities, including social norms regarding their roles, economic marginalization, as well as social expectations.⁹³

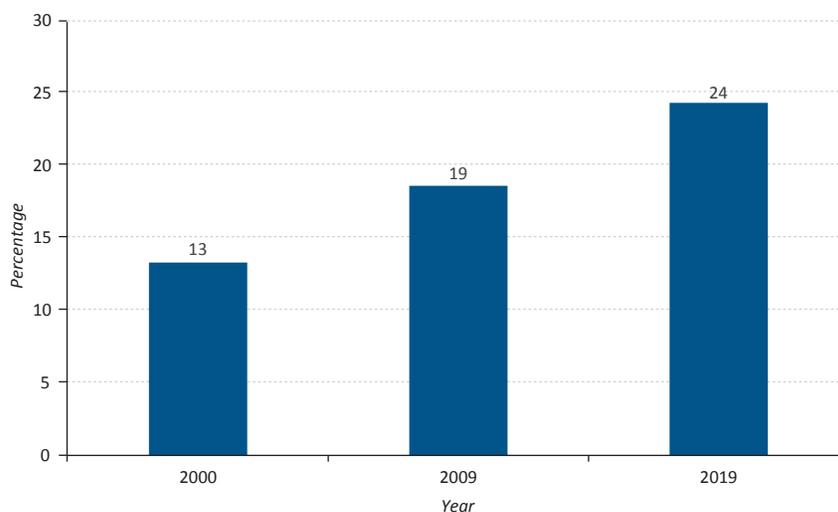
5.2.6. Inclusive, representative and participatory decision-making institutions

In most countries around the world, progress towards equality between women and men in decision-making has been slow. Women still hold only a minority of decision-making positions in public and private institutions.⁹⁴ The World Economic Forum 2018 Global Gender Gap Report found that, across the four sub-indices of gender equality, the largest gap is on political empowerment.⁹⁵ At all levels of decision-making, from the head of state to the executive to the parliament, women remain under-represented. Globally, just 6.6 percent of heads of state are women, while women hold 21 percent of cabinet-level positions.⁹⁶ OECD analysis shows that not only the political context, but also informal appointment rules affect women's representation at top decision-making government positions.⁹⁷ The percentage of women in both houses of national parliaments stands at 24 percent globally (see Figure 5.2).⁹⁸ According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as of January 2019, women hold at least 30 per cent of parliamentary seats (single/lower house) in 50 countries, and less than 10 per cent in 27 countries.⁹⁹ Women also remain underrepresented in other sectors, including in senior judicial positions.¹⁰⁰

There are several barriers to women's political participation. Gender norms and stereotypes are often a deterrent to the selection of women candidates and pose obstacles to women throughout the electoral process. To compensate for this, several countries have adopted temporary special measures¹⁰¹ such as gender quotas, which can significantly improve women's chances of being elected.

Figure 5.2.

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments since 2000



Source: IPU, 2019.

Half of the countries of the world use some type of gender quota to elect their parliament.¹⁰² In Tunisia, for example, constitutional reforms and legislated measures to ensure women's representation in decision-making led to sizable gains,¹⁰³ with women holding 36 percent of parliamentary seats¹⁰⁴ and 47 percent of local government seats as of 2018.¹⁰⁵ In 2004, Slovenia issued a decree mandating gender-balanced representation in the composition of public bodies at senior management level. Within four years it had reached a 50/50 ratio in the highest management of the national administration.¹⁰⁶ In Mexico, both legislated and voluntary political party quotas¹⁰⁷ have expanded the presence of women in decision-making, with women holding 48 percent and 49 percent of seats in both chambers of parliament, respectively.¹⁰⁸

The effectiveness of quotas largely depends on their design and the country's electoral system.¹⁰⁹ When applied to an electoral system using proportional representation, and supported by other measures such as advocacy, training and gender-sensitive legal reform, quotas can be effective at increasing women's political representation.¹¹⁰ The existence of electoral quotas at national level and sub-national levels do not necessarily correlate; for example, India uses sub-national quotas which range from 33 to 50 per cent reserved seats,¹¹¹ but has no national quota and women comprise only 13 per cent of the national parliament.¹¹² Moreover, quota requirements are not always implemented.¹¹³

Although parliaments with greater presence of women have been found to prioritize issues related to gender equality,¹¹⁴ a higher proportion of women legislators is not, per se, a guarantee that gender-sensitive legislation will be enacted. A study of bills submitted to the Argentine Congress between 1983 and 2007 showed that more women's rights bills were introduced when women held a greater share of seats in both chambers. However, the approval rates of these bills declined.¹¹⁵ That may be, in part, because once in office, women face challenges reaching parliamentary leadership positions or fulfilling their duties within the institution itself.¹¹⁶ This can be tackled, among other measures, by encouraging institutions to support and promote women leaders, including parliaments, as well as political parties and electoral management bodies.¹¹⁷ Peer cooperation and support among elected women through the creation of women's caucuses, gender-sensitive legislation and debate, leadership and skills development, women's participation in committee work, engagement of male champions, and the creation of gender-sensitive policies and infrastructure are among the critical elements of gender-sensitive parliaments, for example.¹¹⁸ The publication *Guidelines for Women's Caucuses* provides a practical tool for women seeking to create a women's parliamentary caucus or improve an existing caucus.¹¹⁹ The Inter-Parliamentary Union has developed a series of tools to promote gender

sensitive parliaments, including a Plan of Action for a gender sensitive parliament.¹²⁰ It encourages parliaments to initiate and implement gender sensitive actions that can help reform the institution of parliament and address persistent challenges hampering women's full participation, such as harassment and intimidation.

In the electoral sphere, many electoral management bodies (EMBs) have been encouraging the participation of women across various points in the electoral cycle and within their own internal organization. UN Women and UNDP's publication *Inclusive Electoral Processes* provides hundreds of examples of how EMBs are integrating a gender perspective into their institutions and ensuring a gender mainstreaming perspective in the conduct of elections. In Albania, for example, the Law on Gender Equality in Society (2008) and the Electoral Code mandate that all public sector institutions – including the members of the 89 Commissions of Electoral Administration Zones – must have at least 30 percent of each gender among its members and staff at the national and local levels.¹²¹ Although many electoral management bodies have endeavored to make electoral processes more inclusive by encouraging the participation of women voters, candidates, observers and in election administration,¹²² women are unrepresented in election management and party leadership overall,¹²³ and many women aspirants struggle to receive support and funding from political parties for their campaigns.

Violence against women in politics – a form of gender-based violence against women¹²⁴ – is a global phenomenon, which negatively impacts on the work of political institutions and violates the political rights of women.¹²⁵ Legislative authorities and political parties can address violence against women in politics by, among others, adopting codes of conduct, reporting mechanisms and zero tolerance policies for sexual harassment and intimidation.¹²⁶ Engaging legislators, parliamentary networks and men and boys in advocacy efforts to prevent and respond to violence is key to implementing such measures.¹²⁷

An important strategy to promote gender equality has been the collaboration between women legislators and women's organizations and movements in the design of laws and public policies. In some countries, women's organizations, non-governmental organizations and research institutes have contributed significantly to drafting legislation, preparing national action plans and monitoring their implementation. In several contexts, grassroots women's groups have initiated and engaged in dialogues between communities and local authorities to influence policies, plans and programmes to address women's priorities (see section 5.3 below). The outcomes of such approaches have been positive where there was an investment to ensure that the dialogues were held on an ongoing basis, rather than as one-off events.¹²⁸

5.3. Institutional approaches in selected SDG target areas

Many SDG targets explicitly refer to women, girls or gender equality (for example, target 6.2 on universal access to sanitation and hygiene). Other targets which do not explicitly reference gender include strong gender dimensions. For example, target 6.1 on access to safe and affordable, drinking water for all may not explicitly reference gender but policies and actions in this area often include attention to gender-differential access to safe water, which is translated into institutional design and practices.

Considering both the explicit and implicit focus on gender equality across SDG targets, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS),¹²⁹ identified 80 SDG indicators relevant for data collection. These indicators relate to 14 out of the 17 SDGs.¹³⁰ Other mappings that link the SDGs with gender equality have been produced to guide analytical and operational work, including by the Economic Commission for Latin America and The Caribbean.¹³¹ It is not the aim of this chapter to cover in depth the whole scope of gender issues across all SDGs. Instead, this section aims to illustrate through

examples how the institutional principles of SDG 16 have informed institutional and operational approaches to gender mainstreaming in different sectors. The following six SDG target areas are explored in more detail below:

- Agricultural productivity and access to land (as part of target 2.3)
- Equal access to education and vocational training (target 4.5)
- Adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene (target 6.2)
- Equal pay for work of equal value (target 8.5)
- Mobility and migration policies (target 10.7)
- Safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems (target 11.2)

Five of these are specifically mentioned in CEDAW.¹³² In addition, the issue of migration policies was selected in view of the heightened and intersecting vulnerabilities faced by women migrants and the importance of leveraging the opportunities that migration offers to women as actors of sustainable development, both in their countries of origin and of destination. Target 7.1 on access to energy was also reviewed and revealed weak mainstreaming of gender dimensions in national policy frameworks (Box 5.7).

Box 5.7. Challenges to mainstreaming gender in energy access

Target 7.1 aims to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by 2030. It has long been recognized that this target has a strong gender component.¹³³ International development institutions have integrated gender into their programmes and practice for the energy sector, including guidelines and toolkits. For example, the Asian Development Bank has developed a gender toolkit for energy.¹³⁴

In spite of this, gender mainstreaming is less common in the energy sector than in other areas analysed in this report. Only a fraction of national energy frameworks around the globe include references to gender or women and propose actions to address gender gaps in the sector. In 2017, an analysis of 192 energy policies, plans or strategies from 137 developed and developing countries found that only one-third of these frameworks included gender considerations. In developing countries, where target 7.1 is most relevant, frameworks mentioned gender in 73 percent of cases in sub-Saharan Africa and 46 percent of cases in Asia and the Pacific, but less than 10 per cent did so in Latin America and Middle East and North Africa.¹³⁵ Another study on 15 countries of East and Southern Africa found that gender was “well integrated” in national energy policies of two countries, and “integrated” in another 7 countries. In two countries, the policy did not mention gender.¹³⁶

An analysis of gender audits for the energy sector conducted by the Energia network in 20 countries of Africa and Asia over the past 15 years concluded that there had been “no alterations to legal frameworks that can be attributed to ENERGIA’s audits”, and that it had “not been possible to identify any budget allocations in the energy sector as a consequence of ENERGIA activities”. However, the study concluded that in some countries, changes in energy sector policies toward better reflection of the gender dimension could be traced back to the audits.¹³⁷

The need to mainstream gender in energy policies has been supported by international, regional and sub-regional organizations. For example, in 2015 members of the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) endorsed the Policy for Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access. Among its key objectives, the policy aims to address gender barriers in expanding energy access. The framework promotes a better understanding of energy and gender considerations at all levels of society. It also undertakes to establish monitoring and accountability frameworks to “provide policy-makers with instrumental and human rights-based indicators and rigorous arguments to align energy interventions with principles of gender equality”.¹³⁸ In June 2017, ECOWAS adopted a Directive that mandates Member States to adopt legislation that requires the use of gender assessments and gender management plans for energy projects likely to have significant gendered impacts.¹³⁹

Source: See footnotes.

5.3.1. Agricultural productivity and access to land

SDG target 2.3 commits to “by 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and nonfarm employment”.

Despite their contribution to global agricultural production, rural women often have inadequate access to productive resources and are trapped in domestic and subsistence-type activities (e.g. collecting water or firewood,) that lower their productivity. Rural women often have little control over the proceeds of their labour due to inadequate access to productive resources, markets, and technology. In addition, rural women and girls are “disproportionately affected by poverty, inequality, exclusion and the effects of climate change.”¹⁴⁰ Providing access to physical assets and resources for production can empower women economically and increase their participation in economic decision-making processes at the household and community levels. Experts also emphasize that securing women’s tenure rights increases the effectiveness of land policy.¹⁴¹

In recent decades, several national laws have promoted legal guarantees for women’s land rights and strived to change the norms and power structures that prevent them from claiming such rights. Examples include Bolivia (National Service for Agrarian Reform Act of 1996), Honduras (Agrarian Reform Law of 1974) and Paraguay (1992 Constitution).¹⁴² The Bolivian Act guarantees women’s right to distribute, administer, own, and use land independently of their civil status.¹⁴³

Nonetheless, gender-discriminatory practices can undercut legal guarantees.¹⁴⁴ In Turkey, for example, while rights to own

and inherit property are gender neutral, dowry practices and inheritance customs guided by customary norms often prevail. As a result, rural women often lack secure land use rights in practice.¹⁴⁵ Women face multiple barriers that make them less likely to exercise their rights, including cultural norms, fear of reprisal, lack of time and mobility and lack of education¹⁴⁶. Women’s participation in land management decisions faces challenges in several parts of the world.

Institutional responses to these barriers include providing information to and sensitizing women on their entitlements and land ownership rights, assets, and land-based livelihood. Interventions have also included facilitating women’s access to legal services (e.g. through mobile courts in rural areas), legal training of women farmers, and drafting laws based on improved understanding of customary practices.¹⁴⁷ In addition to policy design, gender-specific considerations in law enforcement and policy implementation can help to ensure the effectiveness of institutions and the likelihood that expected gender impacts are produced.¹⁴⁸ Agricultural ministries have played a crucial role in many countries in promoting gender-responsive policies through gender mainstreaming. In Guatemala, for example, in 2015 the Ministry of Agriculture approved a Policy on Gender Equality, which aims to systematically mainstream gender in all areas of its work, including its institutional mechanisms, with special emphasis on integrated rural development and food security and nutrition programmes and processes.¹⁴⁹

Transparency measures can support women’s access to land and productive resources. For example, Ethiopia has established a transparent land registration and certification process that is seen as a step forward in promoting women’s land rights.¹⁵⁰ Institutional responses to corruption include the creation of oversight mechanisms to reduce the likelihood of wrongdoing¹⁵¹ as well as awareness raising among public officials and administrators.¹⁵²

Box 5.8. Women organizing against corruption in land titling in Uganda

In Uganda, the Slum Women’s Initiative for Development (SWID), a collective of local women affected by the lack of land rights, implements transparency and accountability initiatives to improve service delivery and local governance processes through grassroots women’s mobilization, and by monitoring and raising awareness of corruption in land titling processes. Since 2013, SWID’s initiatives have been supported, through seed funding and technical support, by the Huairou Commission and UNDP’s global program on anti-corruption.

SWID’s work initially found resistance from local officials, and challenges related to both official corruption and the lack of information about the procedure to claim land titles. In informational meetings with community members, women in Jinja (Uganda) organized themselves to visit local and district land offices. Members of the groups submitted their documentation collectively to avoid paying bribes. As the benefits of the initiative for the entire community became apparent, the suspicions of local officers began to diminish. Through the initiative, 35 women were able to receive land titles in less than 14 months, and 120 more women have submitted their documentation. Men in the community have also started to see SWID as a resource. Starting in 2014, SWID has expanded its work to other provinces in Uganda.

Source: See footnote.¹⁵³

5.3.2. Equal access to education and vocational training

SDG target 4.5 is to “by 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations.” At the global level, despite progress made, significant disparities continue to exist among countries, country income groups, and regions.¹⁵⁴

Access to and completion of education by girls is hampered by socio-economic barriers, among them gender discriminatory norms in the family such as the prioritizing of boys’ education, child marriage, early childbearing and child labour,¹⁵⁵ gender stereotyping in schools, school-related costs, inadequate transportation and facilities, and safety concerns. They also include lower birth registration rates of girls compared to boys, which can deny them legal identity (see Box 1.7 in chapter 1) and result in the inability to access education among other public services. These barriers, in addition to the impacts of inequality, also have significant development costs.¹⁵⁶

Institutional responses include the construction of more schools and investment in training facilities and services, with availability of water and sanitary facilities that are gender sensitive, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas. Bangladesh, for example, has prioritized safety and sanitation for girls in school infrastructure development.¹⁵⁷ School mapping can improve planning and the targeting of infrastructure to the needs of communities, including boarding and lodging to facilitate girls’ enrolment.¹⁵⁸

Globally, Governments have set specific targets toward achieving parity between girls and boys in universal primary and secondary education. There has been an increase of laws and policies aimed at improving girls’ access to education. A UNESCO publication based on 67 reports from Member States across regions notes that nearly all had constitutional and legislative protections from discrimination in education.¹⁵⁹ National constitutions that have been adopted since the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are more likely than those adopted prior to it to include guarantees of girls’ equality in education. They are also more likely to guarantee free primary education, which particularly benefits girls, who are more likely than boys to be prevented from going to school by families due to financial hardship.¹⁶⁰ Laws and policies supporting secondary education are weaker, and school fees at this level are a significant impediment to access. Regions with the highest reported rates of charging tuition fees are those with the lowest girls’ completion rates.¹⁶¹

Public agencies have adopted measures aimed at strengthening access through both compulsory education and by addressing the socio-cultural challenges that impede it. Chile, Denmark, Egypt and Sweden have strengthened their capacity to identify such challenges in order to inform ministerial policies

and strategies.¹⁶² Laws and programmes that address child marriage and allow for and facilitate continued schooling for pregnant girls and readmission to schools after pregnancy may also help to eliminate discrimination that contributes to girls’ exclusion from education.

Countries also use schemes that provide incentives to families to keep girls in school. Conditional cash transfer programs around the world often include cash transfers when girls reach educational milestones, as well as school feeding programmes. Schemes have also provided free books and supplies and eliminated school fees for girls.¹⁶³ Other measures include family-friendly policies and laws – such as leaves of absence for parents and caregivers to participate in school or education-related activities – as well as flexible work arrangements.

Some countries have taken action to combat gender stereotypes. In Norway, the Gender Equality Act mandates that learning materials be based on gender equality.¹⁶⁴ Germany and Guatemala have promoted gender-sensitive curriculum reform, including the promotion of literacy and numeracy and incentives to access science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) among girls.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, initiatives can entail gender awareness training and sensitization of teachers, officials and communities to, among other issues, the importance of girls education and detecting and addressing gender and other forms of bias.¹⁶⁶ Such work may be accompanied by standards and measures for supportive learning environments, for example codes of conduct for teachers and inclusion programmes tackling disability, ethnicity, poverty and other dimensions that intersect with gender,¹⁶⁷ for example the provision of instruction in indigenous languages¹⁶⁸ or sign language.¹⁶⁹

Accountability for meeting gender equality goals hinges on government capacity and willingness to generate accurate educational data and indicators aimed at capturing specific gaps – e.g. on girls’ enrolment, attendance and school completion rates. Information on the performance of the education system, including disaggregated data and information on schools, school district policies and procedures, and educational achievement, can help to monitor progress on gender equality in education. In order to assess alignment with national education, development and gender goals, other data such as that on population groups, incomes, health and nutrition, and transportation, is also important.

Gender audits can be a powerful tool to hold national and local governments and educational institutions’ governing bodies to account. In Ethiopia, a gender audit carried out by the Ministry of Education in 2007 recommended further investments in education for girls and women across the country. Based on the recommendations of the audit, the Government established a national Women’s Service Standing Committee as an independent forum to monitor and evaluate the implementation of policies, strategies and guidelines promoting girls’ education.¹⁷⁰

Corruption at the political, administrative (central and local) and school levels in conjunction with gender discrimination can threaten girls' participation in education.¹⁷¹ Tackling the embezzlement of education funds - e.g. allocated to the provision of textbooks - may decrease the probability of girls being kept out of school.

Several countries have introduced mechanisms to allow multiple stakeholders (including parents, children and young people, business leaders and community groups, among others) to engage in school policy processes and decision-making in order to reduce girls' dropout rates and enhance the gender responsiveness of school services. In 2010, an initiative by three municipalities in South Africa, for example, reduced the school dropout rate for girls by 75 per cent in three years through an inclusive approach to reproductive health education aimed at tackling discrimination against girls, teenage pregnancy and HIV infection. The involvement of senior officials of the Departments of Education and Health, school personnel, parents, caregivers and female students was instrumental to the success of this initiative.¹⁷² Another area of intervention concerns school-related safety and addresses forms of gender-based violence in or linked to schools such as rape, bullying, harassment and abuse,¹⁷³ which is prioritized in many countries including Burkina Faso, Egypt, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, Venezuela and Zambia.¹⁷⁴

5.3.3. Adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene

SDG target 6.2 calls for the achievement, by 2030, of "access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and" ending "open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations." In many regions, particularly in rural communities, women are responsible for maintaining household hygiene and sanitation as well as water collection. Yet women often face unequal access to sanitation services, especially in rural areas. The provision

of sanitation services and the installation of facilities alone do not guarantee positive outcomes for women and girls. It is important to understand the needs and concerns of women and girls to develop effective service delivery that is responsive to them.

Measures have been taken to tackle barriers to women's engagement in sanitation management in many countries. The State Water and Sanitation authority of Madhya Pradesh, India, established village water and sanitation committees - at least half of whose positions must be filled by women - to decide on the type of technology used by - and the location of - the sanitation facility. The involvement of women in making decisions about water and sanitation management at the village level¹⁷⁵ enabled the application of their knowledge towards increasing the availability, quality and reliability of water sources.¹⁷⁶

Strengthening women's engagement in sanitation and hygiene services can lead to enhanced agency as well as better services, both of which improve gender outcomes. Studies show that promoting women's access to information on hygiene enhances ownership of household sanitation facilities in rural areas.¹⁷⁷ Raising women's awareness of their rights to access government records enables government scrutiny and enhances accountability.¹⁷⁸ Social accountability has produced positive outcomes for the delivery of WASH services and women's empowerment. In Pakistan during 2015 and 2016, social accountability tools (e.g. budget tracking) helped women to implement and monitor sanitation and hygiene development plans and hold relevant stakeholders accountable for addressing gender-responsive concerns and improving service delivery.¹⁷⁹

Countries have started promoting transparency, accountability and participation to address corruption and gender inequality in water and sanitation (see Box 5.10).¹⁸⁰

Box 5.9. Women's engagement in WASH initiatives in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

In 2013-2014 in Thankot, in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, women's groups trained women to administer citizen report cards to monitor government performance in nine areas of service delivery in the WASH sector and a WASH advocacy committee was formed, with support from partner NGOs, to hold awareness-raising workshop for community members on governance and anti-corruption. Nine sub-committees were subsequently formed to monitor local water and sanitation as well as public budgeting, with support from NGO partners ranging from local to international. Through engagement with officials from the village development committee, local political parties, and others, a joint action plan was developed based on the report card recommendations. These efforts have led to greater transparency of the village development committee's budget and information and its establishment of a permanent monitoring committee to prevent corruption, the inclusion of women leaders in government planning meetings and access to capacity-building funds by women in the community. Women participating in focus group discussions reported that fewer family members were experiencing water-borne illness since the start of regular testing of well water. Moreover, the mobilized women reported a greater sense of empowerment through holding governments accountable and being aware of their rights to services. They also reported a lower incidence of petty bribery and better relationships with service providers.

Source: See footnote.¹⁸¹

Box 5.10. Enhancing integrity and women's empowerment in the water sector in the Philippines

Corruption has undermined the quality of water and sanitation services in the Philippines. The control of water services by vested interests has also led to higher costs of water and higher water tariffs, and limited the opportunities of women and other groups (e.g., indigenous people, people living in rural areas) to participate in water service delivery. To address these problems, the SDG Fund supported a two-year project (2015-17) aimed at empowering women and enhancing integrity in the water and sanitation sector. ProWater, which was implemented by international, national, regional and local partners, including both state and non-state actors, mainstreamed gender considerations into all of its tools (e.g. assessment, communications, presentation materials, etc.) and knowledge products, including how it measures access to and the quality of water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

ProWater contributed to the participation of women and girls in decision-making concerning the planning, monitoring, and implementation of safe water and sanitation programmes. Between 2015 and 2017, a total of 3,277 women were engaged in conducting assessments and data validation, sector planning, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation, sanitation programming, water quality monitoring, water safety planning, community organizing/social preparation activities, and communications and advocacy. 4,126 girls actively participated in group hygiene activities in schools and day care centres, and in the development of community murals in 7 municipalities.

The project enhanced the integrity and governance of the water and sanitation sector, especially at the local level, including by creating five Citizens/Integrity Groups to ensure transparency, participation and accountability around water and sanitation issues. The programme ensured that at least 30 per cent of positions in these governance structures, including the Citizen/Integrity groups, were occupied by women.

Source: See footnote.¹⁸²

5.3.4. Equal pay for work of equal value

At the global level, it is estimated that women earn 24 per cent less than men.¹⁸³ Several factors impact the gender pay gap, including discrimination (see chapter 1).

Gender pay gaps have been addressed with rights-based approaches in the form of non-discriminatory laws and policies, and with measures that promote the adoption and implementation of such laws and regulations. Examples include directives of the European Union, the 1963 Equal Pay Act in the USA, the 2010 Equality Act in the United Kingdom and equal pay legislation in 2007 in Namibia.¹⁸⁴ However, despite the adoption of comprehensive legal mechanisms aimed at equal pay for women, gender pay gaps remain in all regions. In the European Union, for instance, the gender pay gap is approximately 16 per cent.¹⁸⁵

The extensive literature on national models for equal pay reveals the importance of addressing gender equality through multiple institutional angles, including social welfare and gender policies on the one hand and labour market policies on the other.¹⁸⁶ Policies aiming to improve women's career progression opportunities and enabling mothers to remain in, or return to, employment have proven to be effective.¹⁸⁷ Other policy measures include raising the minimum wage. Experts also advocate for updated laws and regulations to address gender stereotypes in the labour market and to protect the rights and interests of female employees, including in emerging industries such as those in information and communication technologies.¹⁸⁸ Different policy mixes and institutional settings

can create different outcomes. In Argentina and Chile, for instance, a study from 2015 found that the Argentinian wage-setting system favoured an equal wage distribution and a narrower pay gap than in Chile, where the minimum wage policy appeared to compress wages at the lower end, lifting women's relative pay, albeit at the apparent expense of a falling median wage and a concentration of minimum wage jobs in the formal sector.¹⁸⁹

In order to promote accountability on equal pay for work of equal value, some countries have introduced mandatory reporting on men's and women's wages in companies. According to a survey of 23 countries published in 2016, Australia, Belgium, some states of Canada, Denmark, Finland, France Italy, and Sweden had legal or regulatory instruments mandating companies employing more than a certain number of employees to publish data on wages disaggregated by sex. In 2017 the United Kingdom adopted a similar instrument, as did Germany in 2018.¹⁹⁰ In Iceland, regulation from 2017 aims at holding the pay management systems of companies and institutions up to official standards (ÍST 85 Standard) via certification, to be conducted by accredited certification bodies through audits.¹⁹¹

The scope of these measures varies across countries. The size threshold for reporting varies from 25 to 250 employees. The measure usually applies to employees only. In some countries, the measure covers both the public and private sectors, while in others the obligation to report only applies to private sector firms. The periodicity of the reports can be annual or longer. Sanctions in case of failure to report also vary across countries,

as do transparency requirements. Depending on the country, results have to be made available to union representatives in the firm; to all employees; to a government agency; or posted on the firm's website when it exists.¹⁹² Transparency requirements are high in the United Kingdom, where the government created a website (<https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/>) where the pay gap data reports of individual firms are made accessible to the public.

Accountability for equality of pay can be strengthened in several other ways, including through pay audits and through collective bargaining mechanisms and campaigns. In the UK, for example, employment tribunals are legally mandated to order pay audits when a tribunal states that there has been an equal pay breach.¹⁹³ Public monitoring was conducive to reducing gender pay gaps in Australia. Trade unions brought successful lawsuits to companies by requesting an assessment of (primarily) female employees' remunerations, to have them re-evaluated based on workers' performance, responsibility, nature of the work and skills, using the same standards used to evaluate the remuneration of their male counterparts.¹⁹⁴ Pressure on companies can also come from other institutions. In recent years, shareholders in the USA and regulators in the United Kingdom pressured banks to provide access to information on pay gaps.¹⁹⁵ Sweden has opted to make public rankings of the most women-friendly workplaces part of its an approach to promote equality in the workplace.¹⁹⁶ Voluntary approaches have been used in combination with legal instruments (see Box 5.11).

Non-compliance with established regulations and policies, including those on equal remuneration, can be associated with discrimination. Discouraging such practices is normally achieved by sanctioning non-compliant employers. Conversely, in 2000 Portugal adopted the practice of rewarding compliance on equal pay regulation. The Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (a tripartite body composed by government, employers and workers) awards an "Equality is Quality" prize to compliant employers. The criteria for the award include equal

opportunities in the field of recruitment and pay. The process is based on formal submission of evidence by companies and site visits where management and workers' representatives are interviewed.¹⁹⁸ Promoting mindset change among employers, employees and the general public on equal pay can also be done via establishing tripartite alliances. For example, the Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices of Singapore operates through a physical centre jointly managed by the government, the employers, and the unions to handle cases and complaints of discrimination at the workplace from a holistic perspective.¹⁹⁹

5.3.5. Mobility and migration policies

SDG target 10.7 reads: "Facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies". The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, recently adopted by Member States of the United Nations, addresses this issue and outlines a number of associated policies (Box 5.12).²⁰⁰ Such policies can benefit women migrants who often face significant challenges and intersecting vulnerabilities associated with gender-based discrimination, race, disability, among others.²⁰¹ Migrant women and girls often find themselves vulnerable to labour exploitation, including forced labour, abuse and violation of human rights, trafficking and violence. Empowering migrant women and girls hinges on ensuring that migration governance is gender-responsive, addressing the gender-related dimensions of migration, and in particular the experiences, needs and situations of vulnerability of women and girls.

Non-discriminatory laws and policies at the national level are based on international laws and treaties that protect the rights of migrants and shape labour migration policies. Ecuador, for instance, has made efforts to protect the rights of migrant workers and to integrate them in the Ecuadorian society through legal provisions that enabled institutional arrangements that helped migrant women to find jobs in the

Box 5.11. Promoting equal pay: multi-pronged approach in Switzerland

In 2015, Switzerland launched a large-scale public sector initiative, "Switzerland Advancing Gender Equal Pay (SAGE)". SAGE aims at eliminating the gender pay gap in the whole labour market, with a special focus on the public sector's role of "leading by example". The first pillar of SAGE is the development and promotion of a self-assessment tool, Logib, allowing companies of 50 employees or more to find out whether their practice complies with the requirement of equal pay. The second pillar is a charter for equal pay in the public sector, which calls for regular checks to ensure the respect of equal pay within public administration, in corporations close to the public administration and in public procurement. An increasing number of cantons, cities and communities are signing up to the charter and implementing the commitments (sensitization for legal bases on equal pay; regular evaluation of salaries with the Logib tool; controlling equal pay in procurement and awarding of subsidies and reporting on results to the Federal Office for Gender Equality. The signatories and other stakeholders exchange experiences and best practices at annual conferences. The Initiative won a United Nations Public Service Award in 2018.

Source: UN Public Service Award, 2018.¹⁹⁷

Box 5.12. The gender dimension of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular on Migration

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular on Migration has a strong gender component. Among 187 measures articulated under the 23 objectives of the Compact, 28 refer to women or gender. The Compact emphasizes the need for gender-responsive measures, including with regards to the provision of information and legal guidance, support and counselling, referral mechanisms, complaint and redress mechanisms, and service delivery more generally. It also highlights the importance of women's empowerment, including economic empowerment, access to labour markets and labour mobility, access to finance, and social protection. It pays special attention to the vulnerabilities and needs of women at risk of becoming victims of trafficking. The Compact also emphasizes measures that address sexual and gender-based violence against migrant women. Lastly, the Compact stresses the need for gender sensitive reviews of policies and processes related to immigration management, including access to personal documentation, birth registration, human rights protection, and border management.²⁰²

Source: Authors' elaboration.

country. Since 2013, the government of Costa Rica has a law to protect victims of human trafficking, including women and girls, and punish perpetrators; it has also created a dedicated institution to support that goal.²⁰³ Strong legislative frameworks need to be supported by awareness-raising programmes and institutional changes to ensure compliance with new laws (e.g., through training, incentives, and provision of information).²⁰⁴

Some countries have created one-stop-shops for providing unified and interlinked services to migrants and refugees. In Portugal, the High Commission for Migrations, the public institution that coordinates policy-making on migration at the national level, has established national and local support centres to promote the integration of migrants into Portuguese society and public life. Specialized services that are relevant to women migrants comprise social integration income, family allowance, prenatal allowance, retirement and disability pension among others. The model has been replicated in Belgium, Germany, Czech Republic and Poland.²⁰⁵ Local authorities have a key role to play to keep public fora open to migrants to enhance diversity in planning and decision-making processes and help to inform local service planning.²⁰⁶ For instance, local administrations in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany have created one-stop integration points for migrants and refugees that bring together municipalities, local job centres, welfare offices, and representatives of employers' associations, to facilitate administrative acts and integration measures.²⁰⁷

Another approach is that of integrating and mainstreaming labour migration issues in national employment, gender equality, labour market and development policies. Among other aims, this can help address the issue of downward occupational mobility for migrant women.²⁰⁸ Barriers to women's occupational mobility can be addressed through policies and regulations that protect skill-portability among countries²⁰⁹ or skill development in fields such as financial literacy, formal remittance transfer systems, as well as on managing financial assets, investments and business.²¹⁰

As is the case in other areas, transparency policies and the provision of information to actual and potential migrants have been increasingly used by governments. For example, migrant women can benefit from information on regulations on domestic violence, discrimination and human rights abuse. Government websites provide gender-responsive information on rights, public services procedures, international protection and remedies, laws, and other regulations. Denmark's 'ny i danmark' website, for example, provides access to policies relevant to the granting of visas under the family reunification programme.²¹¹ South Africa, the Philippines and Moldova have set up online information portals on migration, and proactively communicate information to migrant men and women.²¹² Yet, often, information provided to migrants in public reception centres is not gender-specific and is given by staff without gender-responsiveness training. The Philippines has invested in capacity building on gender-responsive service delivery, targeting key government migration agencies both at the national and local levels.²¹³

Civil society organizations, including women's rights organizations that serve typically marginalized groups in host communities, can help incorporate the needs of migrant women and girls in national development plans and other national policies. These groups can demand accountability for public commitments to advance gender equality for migrant women and girls.²¹⁴ Mexico, Moldova and the Philippines have piloted approaches in support of advocacy organisations working on the protection of women migrant workers' rights.²¹⁵ Action by the public sector can also be complemented by community outreach activities by female migrant networks and associations.²¹⁶

Migration, and particularly irregular migration, can be facilitated by corruption (e.g., bribing border guards to cross borders illegally).²¹⁷ Migrant women have specific vulnerabilities to corruption (Box 5.13).²¹⁸

Box 5.13. Gender, corruption and migration

A recent study on the gender dimensions of corruption in migration, based on desk literature review and interviews with 43 stakeholders and female migrants, found that the risk for female migrants to encounter corruption is highest during transit. Bribes can be demanded to allow both regular and irregular migrants to continue their journey. Women who do not possess any financial resources are likely to experience 'sextortion'. Since women who are travelling alone are especially vulnerable, many women are willing to pay for protection, either with financial resources or with their body.

Migrant women who experienced sextortion and other forms of gender-based violence during migration often have to deal with psychological trauma, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Evidence suggests that migrant women are often aware of these risks and try to take preventative measures (e.g. contraception), but are nevertheless willing to take the risk and migrate. Although less frequently, female migrants also encounter corruption in destination countries, mostly linked to police corruption and fraud in the allocation of resources.

The study shows that women experience different levels of vulnerability in different phases of their journey. Vulnerabilities to corruption depend on the individual and cultural background of the women as well as different institutional factors in the origin, transit and destination country. Irregular migrants and those less educated often have higher vulnerability to exploitation and are more likely to be subject to demands by corrupt officials. Also, patriarchal structures in the origin countries often make women more vulnerable to being forced into trafficking networks.

Source: See footnote.²¹⁹

5.3.6. Safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems

SDG target 11.2²²⁰ directly addresses the issue of the responsiveness of transport systems to the needs of women and girls. Transport plays a crucial role in connecting women to goods and services as well as social and economic opportunities.²²¹ Effective transport can, for example, reduce the travel burdens for women and increase their time for education and productive activities, which leads to economic empowerment.²²² Often, women have dissimilar transport needs and patterns from those of men. Yet, public transport systems are often skewed towards serving long journeys and distant destinations mostly used by men, as opposed to short distance requirements typical of women's mobility patterns.²²³ Importantly, women are much more vulnerable than men to sexual harassment while using transport services. In major Latin American cities, for example, six in ten women report that they have been physically harassed while using transport systems.²²⁴

Public institutions have a key role in addressing biases and improving transport services from a gender perspective. The gender dimension is increasingly mainstreamed both in transport policy-making and at the level of programmes and projects. At the policy level, reports from the World Bank dating from the beginning of the 2000s documented the incorporation of gender considerations in transport policy and strategic documents in developing countries, including Senegal and Uganda.²²⁵ At the planning level, the inclusion of the gender dimension in transport planning has been called for since the mid-1990s at least,²²⁶ and progress has been achieved in this regard. However, under-representation of women in transport planning is still a concern in developed and developing countries alike.²²⁷

At the programme and project levels, major donors and international financial institutions have produced toolkits and guidance documents on gender in transport. Such documents put emphasis on establishing men's and women's needs and priorities and transport patterns; on documenting gender-related barriers that exist in relation to transport; and on gender-responsive design of transport infrastructure and services. They also highlight the need for women's participation in all stages of transport projects, including monitoring.²²⁸

Engagement of women and other stakeholders has led to more gender-responsive public transport services. In China, the inclusion of women in a working group for an urban transport project in Liaoning Province helped to address safety concerns, increase frequency of bus services and led to transport route reconceptualization (e.g. to include streetlights, pedestrian paths, etc.) and the procurement process of road construction programmes.²²⁹ In Kathmandu, Nepal, transport operators collaborated with local authorities to provide a more gender-responsive transport service by integrating women into policy-making positions.²³⁰ South Korea introduced the "Pink light technology", which enables pregnant women to receive real time information on priority sitting areas through an electronic device when entering the public transport system.²³¹

Policies to address violence against women in public transport have taken a variety of approaches, including reporting tools based on mobile technologies that victims of aggression can use (Box 5.14). One approach to combat sexual aggression and harassment has been the development of women-only transport solutions, so-called "pink transport", including women-only subways, buses and train cars. Such initiatives are currently ongoing in at least 15 developing and developed countries.

Box 5.14. Facilitating reporting to address violence against women in public transport

In India, the mobile application “SafetiPin” was designed to make communities and cities safer by providing safety-related information collected by users and trained auditors. It is based on a Women’s Safety Audit, which is a participatory tool for collecting and assessing information about perceptions of urban safety in public spaces, with a focus on immediate surroundings of metro stations.²³² In 2016, the transport authority of London issued an “Action for Equality” plan, which sets out commitments to promoting equality for customers, staff and stakeholders. The plan also includes a system to measure progress on a yearly basis. The related “Report It to Stop It” campaign encouraged reporting of sexual assaults, resulting in a 35 per cent increase in reports.²³³ In Kigali, Rwanda, local authorities provided toll free numbers for victims to report any case or incident of sexual harassment while using the public transport system.²³⁴

Source: see footnotes.

They vary from country to country, from policies implemented only during rush hour to women-only cars in rapid service trains. Critics emphasize that these solutions, while contributing to solving acute safety concerns, do not address sexist gender norms and could contribute to reinforcing differences between sexes rather than addressing root causes of sexual harassment.²³⁵

5.4. Key messages on effective gender-responsive institutions

This chapter has examined gender-responsive institutions through the lens of the institutional principles promoted by SDG 16. The analysis shows the relevance of those principles both at the national level and at the level of select targets across the Sustainable Development Goals. The following points emerge from the analysis.

Strong public sector institutions, working in a coordinated manner, are a prerequisite for the design of robust legal frameworks to advance gender equality. National mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, parliaments, law reform commissions, ministries of justice and other institutions are all needed to promote gender equality, and should have the means to effectively fulfil their respective mandates.

National mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, if resourced adequately and given authority, can overcome fragmentation and siloed approaches as they coordinate cross-sectoral policy development and implementation and support greater policy coherence for gender equality and women’s empowerment. They engage a wide spectrum of institutional stakeholders at national and subnational levels and collaborate with a range of partners to fulfil their mandates. Through mainstreaming gender in sectoral ministries and public agencies, they serve to transform public policy values and the culture, implementation actions, and responsiveness of public institutions. They have

spearheaded the development of national action plans on gender equality, ending violence against women, peace and security as well as coordinated gender mainstreaming in national development plans. Through gender analysis and assessment, capacity development and training, they have demanded action for more effective institutionalization of gender mainstreaming.

Gender equality laws and policies are an essential tool to address gender discrimination. Despite the significant body of laws that promote gender equality in most countries, more than 2.5 billion women and girls globally are affected by discriminatory laws and lack of legal protections leaving them without the legal basis to claim their rights. Enforcement remains an issue in many contexts. Women’s participation in legal reform processes has contributed to the inclusion of specific provisions in constitutions and laws enhancing responsiveness to the needs of women and preventing discrimination, harassment and violence.

Transparency and access to information are essential in order to assess the impact of government policy decisions on gender and to scrutinize the quality and responsiveness of public services to women’s needs. Transparency frameworks and initiatives are most effective when embedded in an enabling environment of broad-based policies that promote gender equality. In this context, open data and public reporting, including on budgets and spending, need to ensure that information is made available in ways that are accessible to all women and girls. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have helped to boost transparency and access to information. ICT-based information management systems facilitate the retrieval and analysis of information, including sex-disaggregated data. Access to information has benefited from advances on the generation and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics in the past two decades, with approximately 105 countries reporting to be monitoring and collecting national gender statistics.

Accountability of institutions of governance to the public is critical for effective implementation of the SDGs. Gender-

responsive accountability includes gender equality as a standard against which public sector performance is assessed and measured. Gender-responsive budgeting, an example of fiscal accountability, allows finance institutions to structure tax and spending policies to promote gender equality. National mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls can facilitate the engagement of sector ministries, parliaments and civil society on gender responsive budgeting. Multi-stakeholder approaches have been particularly effective in pushing ministries forward and opening space for greater civil society dialogue and influence. Parliamentary oversight and audit bodies play a major role in this. Gender assessments and specifically gender audits on how public resources were actually allocated, conducted by independent oversight agencies and civil society, can improve resource tracking and delivery of gender responsive services.

Poor women are disproportionately impacted by corruption, which covers a wide range of exploitative practices linked to poor delivery of services and poor leadership. Definitions and indices of corruption often do not include the multidimensional nature and impact of corruption. Tackling corruption requires the integration of gender into corruption measurement tools and collection of sex disaggregated data to identify gender differentiated patterns of corruption. Other important channels for addressing corruption in the context of SDG 5 include: anti-corruption legislation; expanding the definition of corruption to include the range of women's experiences; adoption of gender-responsive anti-corruption programs and policies; access to recourse measures and mechanisms; and safe spaces to report corruption.

Women remain under-represented at all levels of public decision-making, in all branches and at all levels of government. Gender norms and stereotypes are often a deterrent to the selection of women candidates and pose obstacles to women throughout the electoral process. Several countries have adopted temporary special measures such as gender quotas, which can significantly improve women's chances of being elected. Parliaments with greater presence of women have been found to prioritize issues related to gender equality. However a higher proportion of women legislators is not, per se, a guarantee that gender-sensitive legislation will be enacted. Political institutions should support and promote women leaders in parliaments, as well as political parties and electoral management bodies. Efforts must be made to ensure gender parity across other public institutions, including the justice system. It is also important to address the issue of violence against women in politics, which is a global phenomenon.

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