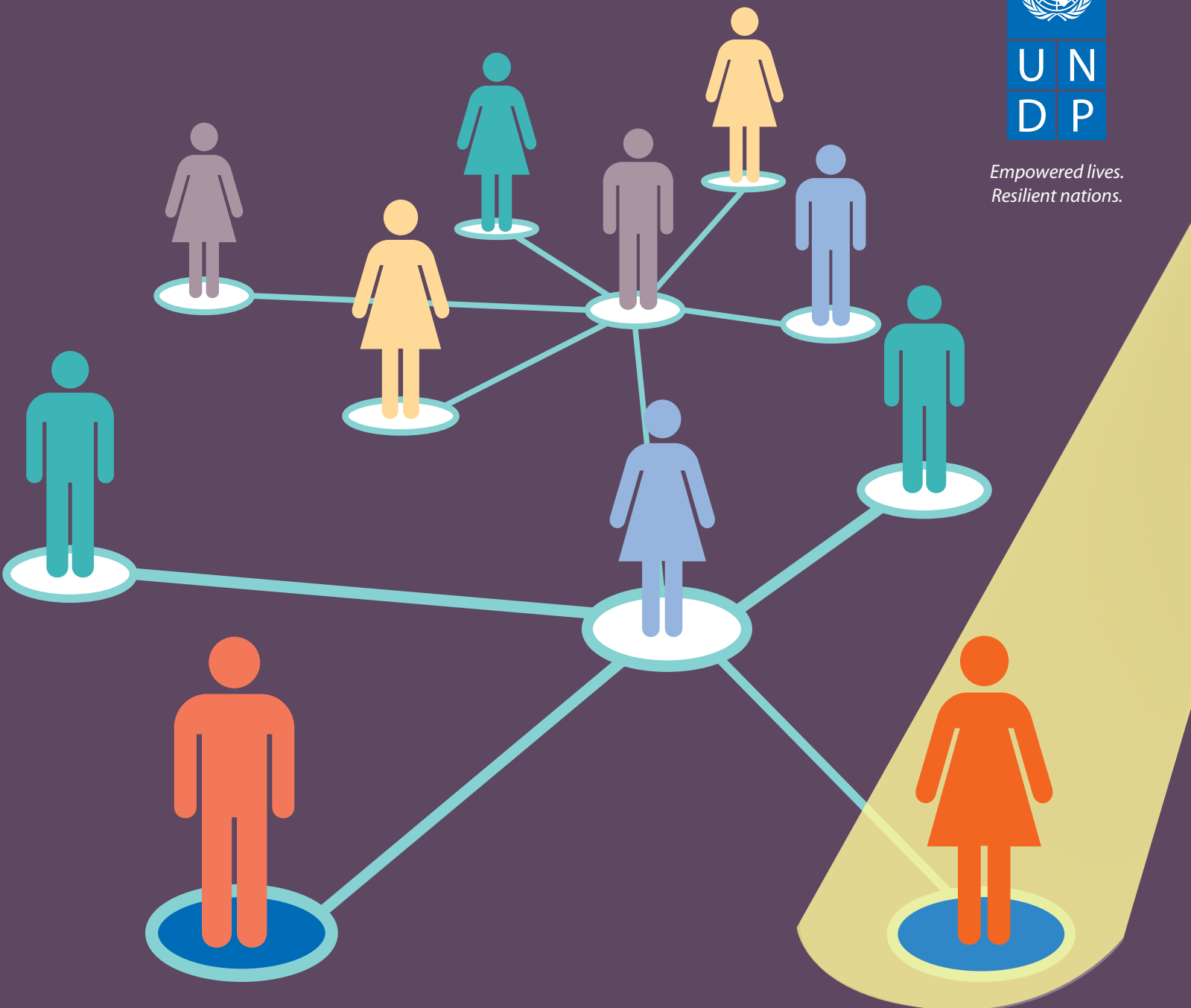




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Resilient nations.*



United Nations Development Programme



GENDER EQUALITY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA

Website: www.undp.org/gepa

Email: gepa@undp.org

Twitter: @UNDPGEPA @UNDP

UN Teamworks Space: <https://undp.unteamworks.org/login?destination=node/17098>

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEPA	Gender Equality in Public Administration (UNDP Initiative)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEESAC	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women



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FOREWORD

Gender equality is both an essential development goal in its own right and a driver of human development. International law recognizes that everyone has a right to participate in public life, but it remains an ongoing challenge to achieve women's *equal* participation, especially in decision-making. The importance of advancing women's leadership in politics has continued to gain traction. Although much remains to be done, advances are being made slowly but surely. Unfortunately, less attention and support has been given to promoting women's leadership in public administration.

In response, UNDP developed a joint research and policy development initiative titled Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA) to help fill this gap. This global report reflects extensive research based on available national data, and provides analysis of the obstacles in the way of women's equal participation and decision-making in public administration. It highlights examples of approaches which can work, and offers recommendations for further action.

A critical mass of women in public administration, in particular in senior decision-making positions, is important for equity reasons and because it brings more women's perspectives to policy and other discussions. Positions in public administration may also be among the few available or 'acceptable' employment opportunities for women, making it all the more important that women have a fair chance of competing for them.

This report will be an important resource for governments, public administrations, United Nations agencies, development partners, academic institutions, civil society and women's organizations. We hope that it be a catalyst for policy and programming designed to accelerate women's equal participation and leadership in public administration and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Helen" and "Clark" being capitalized and prominent.

Helen Clark
UNDP Administrator



INTRODUCTION

Public administration is the bedrock of government and the central instrument through which national policies and programmes are implemented. In an ideal world, public administration is guided by principles of fairness, accountability, justice, equality and non-discrimination, and serves as a model of governance for society which includes the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the civil service workforce.

However, globally, this is not yet the reality. Instead of being a driving force behind the implementation of internationally-agreed goals on gender equality and human rights standards and principles, in many developed and developing countries, public administration often remains a patriarchal institution, perpetuating gender-biased traditions, attitudes and practices. Women do not yet participate equally in public administration, especially in leadership and decision-making roles.

The target of a minimum of 30 percent of women in leadership positions, originally endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1990 and reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995,¹ is being approached in many public administrations and even surpassed in some. Nevertheless, while progress is being made in terms of total numbers of women in public administration, both glass ceilings and glass walls continue to present challenges to women's equal participation in decision-making positions.

A fundamental argument for increased representation of women in public service is that when the composition of the public sector reflects the composition of the society it serves, government will be more responsive and effective. Thus, closing gender gaps in public administration is important to ensuring truly inclusive development and democratic governance and helps to restore trust and confidence in public institutions and enhance the sustainability and responsiveness of public policies.² It is a critical policy issue in both developing and developed countries.³

Women's equal participation in public administration and decision-making and can also be viewed as a necessary condition for women's interests to be fully taken into account and properly addressed. According to the *2011 Human Development Report*,⁴ analysis shows how power imbalances and gender inequalities at the national level are linked to unequal access to clean water and better sanitation, impacts on land degradation, etc.



(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

Without a critical mass of women, public administration is not tapping into the full potential of a country's workforce, capacity and creativity. Women generally represent more than half of the population.

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