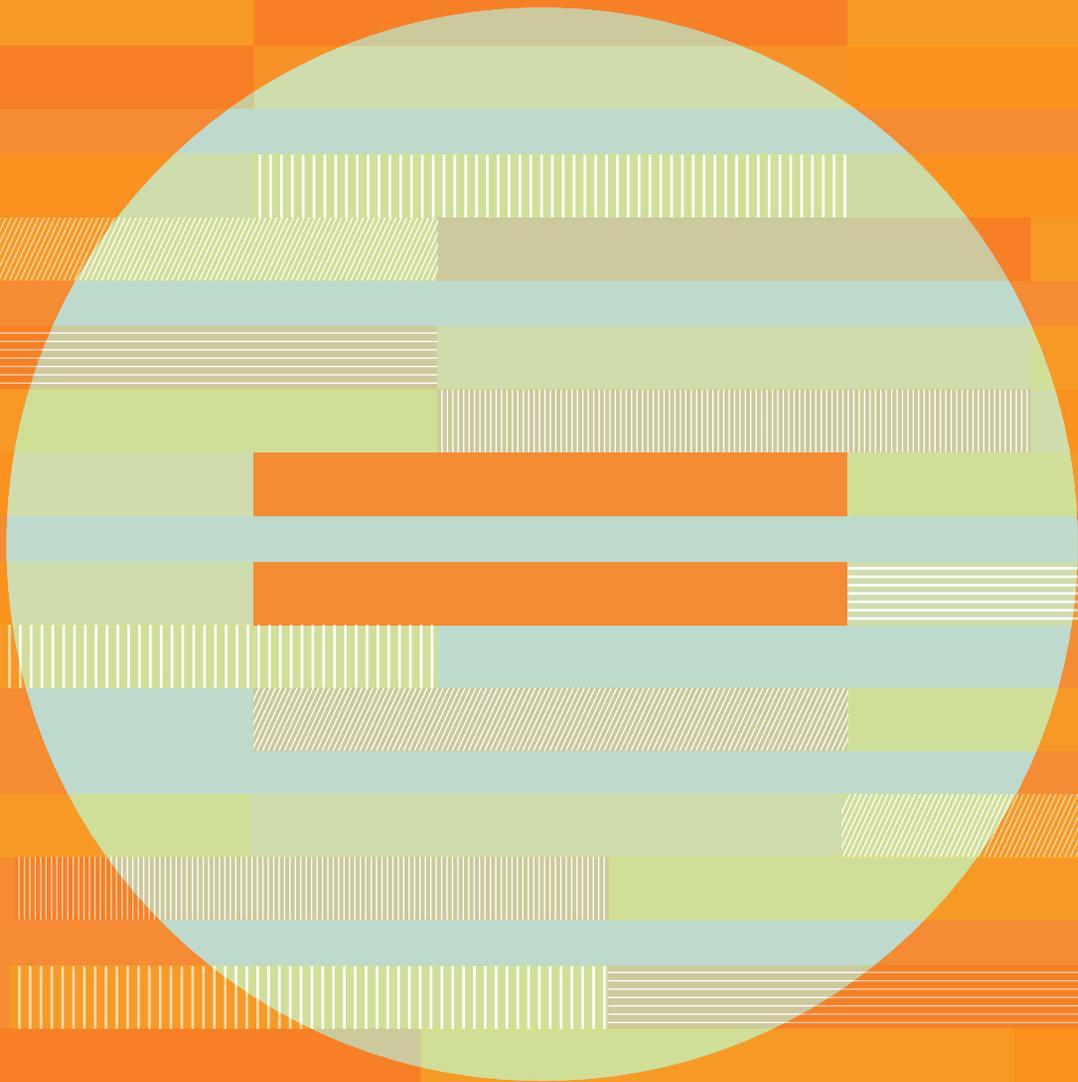


Economic &

Social Affairs

The World's Women 2015

Trends and Statistics



United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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Message from the Secretary-General

The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics comes as the international community marks the twentieth anniversary of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and looks forward to the adoption of sustainable development goals to guide our global fight against poverty through the year 2030.

Women's advancement, equality and empowerment, so central to progress on the Millennium Development Goals, remain indispensable to success.

This report confirms that the lives of women have improved in a number of areas over the last two decades—but the pace has been slow and uneven across regions as well as within and among countries.

I commend this publication to governments, researchers, scholars, non-governmental organizations and citizens around the world. I trust that all will use the valuable information in these pages as we strive together to ensure that every woman enjoys her human rights and has the chance to achieve her full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ki" and last name "Ban" being more prominent than the middle name "Moon".

BAN Ki-moon

Preface

This sixth edition of *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics* provides the latest statistics and analysis on the status of women and men at global and regional levels and reviews the progress towards gender equality over the last 20 years. The eight chapters of the report cover several broad policy areas identified in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the framework that set the international agenda for improving the status of women. These areas include population and families, health, education, work, power and decision-making, violence against women, environment and poverty. In each area, a life-cycle approach is used to reveal the experiences of women and men during different periods of life—from childhood and the formative years, through the working and reproductive stage, to older ages.

The statistics and analysis presented in *The World's Women 2015* are based on a comprehensive and careful assessment of a large set of available data and take into account new and emerging methodological developments in gender statistics. The report reveals that the lives of women have improved in some respects. For instance, the gender gap in education has narrowed, particularly at the primary level, and in many countries women now outnumber men in tertiary education. In other areas, however, progress has stagnated. Today, half the world's women join the labour force compared to three quarters of men, a situation not unlike that of 20 years ago. Women are far from having an equal voice to men in public and private spheres. And, unacceptably, in every region of the world, women are still subjected to various forms of violence. Women also face new challenges, including those related to changes in living arrangements. As a result, older women today are more likely to be living alone and in poverty than men of the same age.

My sincere hope is that this publication will deepen our understanding of the current status of women and men and of the advances in women's empowerment. I also trust that it will serve as a model for national and international stakeholders in identifying and addressing data gaps on gender issues. Much work remains to fill the gaps in coverage of key topics, to improve the timeliness and comparability of data over time and across countries, and to strengthen national capacity in the production and use of gender statistics.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be '吴红波' (Wu Hongbo), written in a cursive style.

Wu Hongbo
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

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