

## INTRODUCTION

Despite notable progress in the region to advance gender equality, women in Asia and the Pacific continue to face discriminatory policies, socio-economic and cultural barriers, as well as serious threats to their security that violate their basic rights and constrain their capacities.

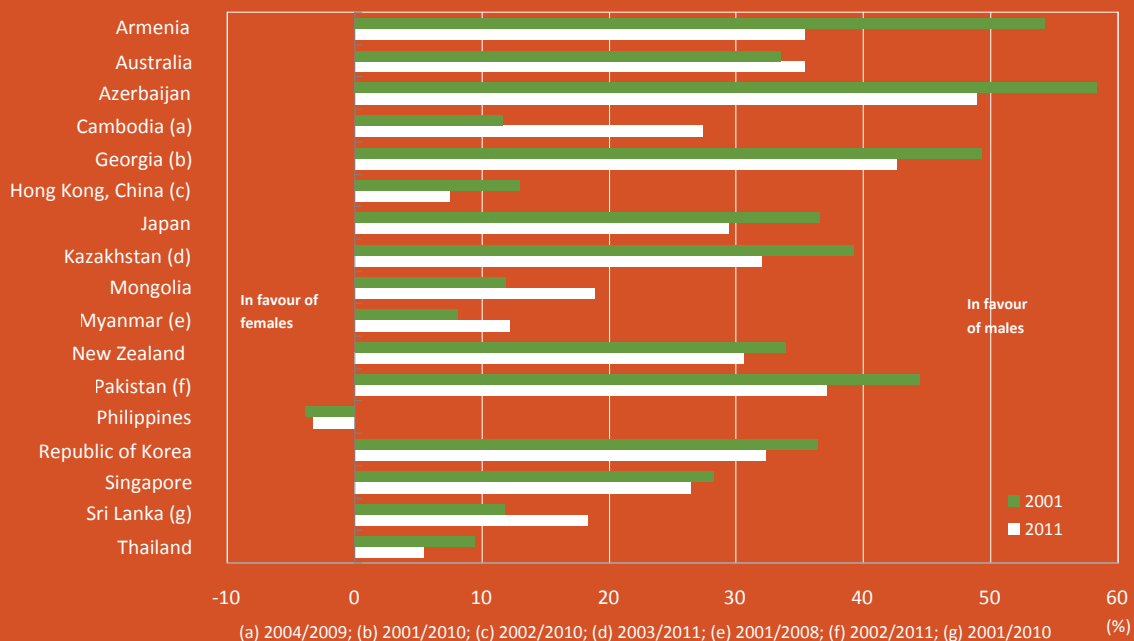




## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

- ✿ For every 100 employed men in Asia and the Pacific, there are only 62 employed women.<sup>1</sup>
- ✿ Across the region, women predominate in vulnerable employment with low pay, limited options and little, if any, social protection.<sup>2</sup>
- ✿ Such disparities translate into an enduring gender wage gap, with women's wages constituting between, on average, 70 - 90 percent of men's wages worldwide.<sup>3</sup>

**Graph: Gender wage gaps in selected Asian-Pacific economies, 2001 and 2011**



Source: ESCAP Online Statistical Database

- ✿ Many women in the region still face restrictions on independent ownership and access to property, assets and credit.<sup>4</sup>
- ✿ In Asia-Pacific economies, women spend an average of 3+ hours more than men per day doing unpaid, unrecognized work.<sup>5</sup>

## → PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

- ✦ Less than 18 percent of seats in Asia-Pacific's national parliaments are held by women.<sup>6</sup>
- ✦ Only three countries in the Asia and Pacific region have attained the critical mass of 30 percent female representation in national parliaments.<sup>7</sup>
- ✦ The portfolios of women ministers in the region are generally limited to the areas of family, women's affairs, children, youth, environment and education.<sup>8</sup>
- ✦ On average, women account for only 6 percent of seats on corporate boards in the region.<sup>9</sup>

## → EDUCATION AND HEALTH

- ✦ The Asia-Pacific region has, on average, achieved gender parity at the primary school level.<sup>10</sup>
- ✦ Girls' enrolment in secondary education remains lower than boys' in a number of countries in the region.<sup>11</sup>
- ✦ Among the poorest 20 percent of children in certain South Asian countries, girls have, on average, completed five years less of formal education than boys.<sup>12</sup>



- ✿ Across the region, nearly 20 million births were not attended by skilled health personnel in 2011.<sup>13</sup>
- ✿ South Asia accounts for the second highest number of maternal deaths worldwide.<sup>14</sup>

## → VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- ✿ Violence against women is a manifestation of gender inequality and disrupts the health, survival, safety and freedom of women and their families across the region.
- ✿ Between 25 - 50 percent of women in certain parts of the region have experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner.<sup>15</sup>
- ✿ Surveys indicate that 30 - 40 percent of women workers in Asia-Pacific countries report being subjected to some form of verbal, physical or sexual harassment.<sup>16</sup>
- ✿ National studies estimate that the total costs of violence against women can range between 2 - 7 percent of a country's GDP.<sup>17</sup>

ERMENT



‘WOMEN *in*  
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC’

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