

ABOUT UN WOMEN

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

SITUATION OF WOMEN – OVERVIEW

The Republic of Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago, made up of more than 17,000 islands. It is the fourth most populous nation in the world, and has the largest Muslim-majority population.ⁱ After a long period of authoritarian rule, Indonesia began a transition to democracy in 1998, ushering in a period of political, social and economic reforms called '*reformasi*'. This has had a positive overall effect on the situation of women and on progress towards gender equality.ⁱⁱ A commitment to the advancement of women has been shown through the ratification of international agreementsⁱⁱⁱ, passage of laws, and the establishment of institutional policies and programmes that address women's specific needs. A landmark Presidential Decree, issued in 2000, obliges all government agencies to mainstream gender in their policies, programmes and budgets to eliminate gender discrimination. The *Medium Term National Development Plan* specifically identifies gender as a cross-cutting issue.

Legal Frameworks for Gender Equality — There have been progress in women's political participation and in combating violence against women. Political representation by women increased from 11% in 2004 to 18% in 2009, due in large part to new election law quotas advocated by

women's groups. In keeping with the government's announced 'zero-tolerance policy' on violence against women, a number of related laws have been enacted, including the *Law on Domestic Violence* (2004), the *Victim Protection Law* (2006), and the *Law on Anti-Trafficking* (2007). Indonesia has a vibrant civil society. Many NGOs working on gender equality issues have played instrumental roles in lobbying the government and the National Assembly to amend discriminatory legislation and enact new laws that address women's rights including the drafting of Gender Equality Law.

Despite legislative revisions, some laws discriminate against women in the areas of family and marriage while poor enforcement of others continues to rob women of *de facto* equality. The *Marriage Act of 1974* states that men are the heads of households, allows polygamy, and sets the minimum age of marriage for girls at 16. At the local level, 154 discriminatory bylaws, identified by *Komnas Perempuan*, limit the ability of women to exercise their rights. The bylaws contain rules on clothing, morality and religion—some oblige Muslim women to be veiled, while others prohibit women from leaving their houses after dark without being accompanied by a spouse or male relative.^{iv} Administrative decentralization—where authority has been devolved from the central government to local authorities—and the rise of religious fundamentalism, are factors linked to weak enforcement of laws, and the enactment of local legislation that curtails women's freedoms and violates their human rights.

Poverty — Financial crises and natural disasters have caused massive displacement of people and halted socio-economic growth in the affected areas. While relations between religious and ethnic groups are harmonious, sectarian violence and active separatist movements in different provinces are worsening factors. Indonesian women are more vulnerable to chronic poverty due to persistent gender inequalities in income distribution, access to credit, control over property and natural resources, and access to employment and livelihood opportunities.

Unemployment and migration — 53.3% women compared to 86.2% men are in formal employment.^v Unemployment remains high, with more women than men being unemployed, or engaged in risky and vulnerable work in the informal sector. Unemployment is a key reason for out-

migration. In 2009, an estimated 4.3 million migrants overseas with 78% being women were engaged in domestic or care work,^{vi} in precarious conditions without legal and social protections.

Violence against women — Gender-based violence is an endemic problem, fueled by poverty, harmful gender stereotypes, and impunity for perpetrators. Domestic violence and trafficking are serious concerns. There has been uneven implementation of laws aimed at eliminating violence, particularly at the local level, where autonomous decision-making does not recognize national legislation and priorities, and women face obstacles accessing justice. Violence has been linked to women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, as cause and consequence—in 1989, women made up 2.5% of people living with HIV/AIDS, but by 2009 the figure had jumped to 25%, with the majority being married women infected by their partners. Women with HIV/AIDS have been reported to have experienced violence such as sexual abuse and forced sterilization.^{vii}

Women in conflict situations — Secessionist violence has plagued the provinces of Aceh and Papua for years, with peace agreements only recently being signed with the government. Peace negotiations and peace-building efforts have unfortunately not included women, resulting in post-conflict policies and programmes that largely neglect the needs and rights of women.

UN WOMEN IN INDONESIA

Since 1992, UN Women has been supporting the Government of Indonesia and civil society partners address national priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment. The current focus of support includes:

Supporting gender advocates and community-based initiatives to empower and protect the rights of women migrant workers — including through pre-departure training programmes, disseminating information on safe migration, and providing paralegal assistance for workers and their families. An important result was the passing of the *Law on the Protection of Migrant Workers* in Blitar district (2008), which is now being replicated in other districts. UN Women is providing technical assistance and capacity development to government and NGOs to advocate for and pass Domestic Workers Bill that includes gender equality and promotion of women's rights, and to enhance social protection and labour policies.

Promoting laws and policies towards enhancing women's safety, legal rights and access to justice — using CEDAW as a basis, UN Women has supported the development of a stronger legislative framework to remove discrimination against women and secure their rights. UN Women has supported research and advocacy for amended and new legislation, such as the Domestic Violence Law. UN Women

is working to further support implementation and enforcement of legislation; reviews of existing discriminatory laws, review of the National Action Plan on VAW, development of National Strategy on Gender Mainstreaming, development of National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (SCR 1325) and the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS; and on research on masculinities and VAW.

Supporting community efforts to combat VAW in post-tsunami and post-conflict in Aceh — such as the 'Safe Villages' initiative—piloted in two villages with high incidences of violence—which set up a community watch mechanism and built the capacity of service providers (hospital staff, counselors, law enforcement) to respond effectively to VAW, and ensure survivors access to justice.

Strengthening women's legal rights by using CEDAW to make local laws (qanuns) gender-responsive — UN Women helped develop capacity among NGOs, legal practitioners, including Syariah Court judges, to review and draft qanuns that align CEDAW gender equality principles with Islam to protect women's rights. This has led to the passing of several important qanuns, such as the Qanun on Women's Empowerment.

Integrating a gender perspective in recovery and peace-building processes — UN Women assisted the provincial government of Aceh to develop a Gender Policy based on the principles of SCR 1325 allocating reconstruction funding, increasing women's participation in peace processes, and addressing needs and capacities of female ex-combatants. UN Women is continuing to give technical assistance to the government to implement the National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security at the national and provincial (Aceh and Papua) levels.

ⁱ Of a total population of 237 million, 49.9% are women, and 86% are Muslim. National Statistics Bureau of Indonesia, 2010.

ⁱⁱ The Human Development Report 2010 ranks the country at a 'medium' level of development (108 out of 169 countries), while its Gender Inequality Index (GII) ranks it at 100 (with lowest ranked 138).

ⁱⁱⁱ Indonesian Government ratified CEDAW in 1984

^{iv} See "[154 bylaws haunt women, 15 more to come](#)", Jakarta Post, 30 January 2010, and [Komnas Perempuan](#) (National Commission on the Elimination of Violence Against Women).

^v 'Gender Inequality Index, Table 4', [Human Development Report 2010](#), UNDP.

^{vi} "[The long journey of justice for Indonesian migrant workers](#)", press release, ILO, October 4, 2011.

^{vii} See "[Women with HIV face greater risks](#)", Jakarta Post, November 30, 2010 and [Republic of Indonesia Country Report on the Follow up to the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS \(UNGASS\) 2008-2009](#).

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