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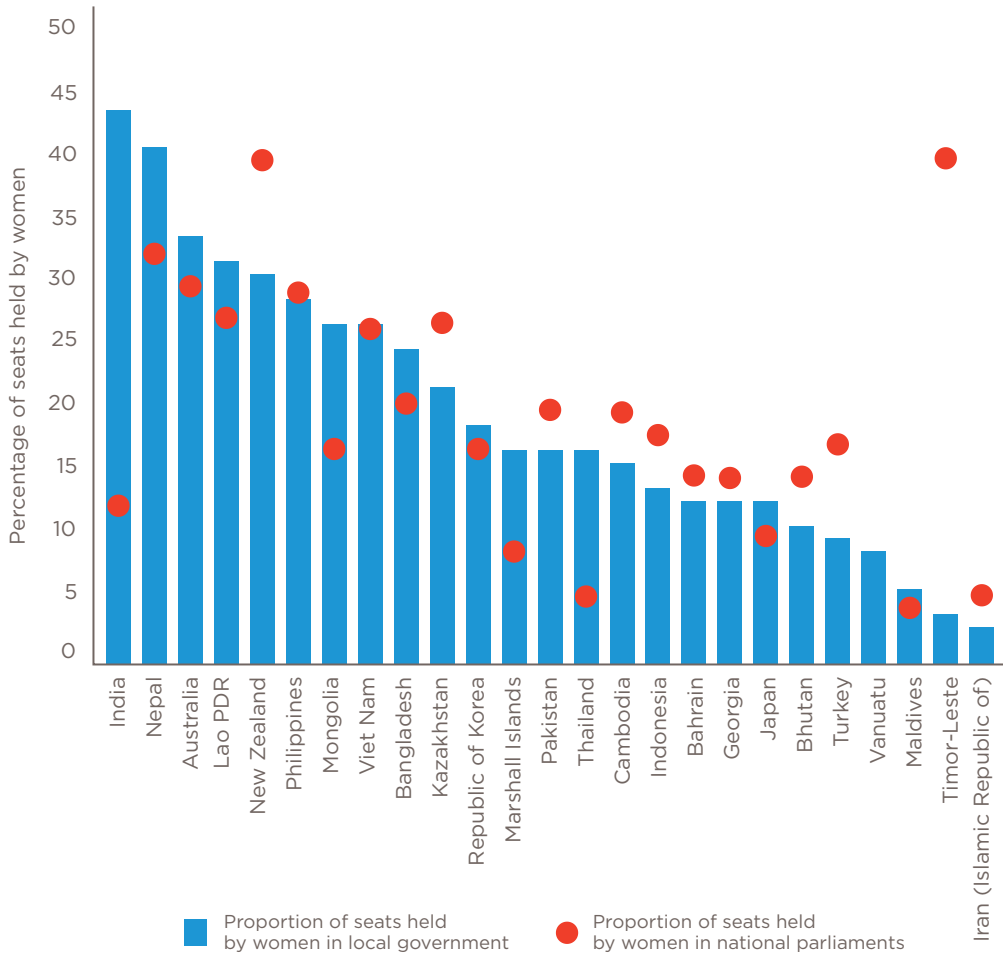
# Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific

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25 Years After The Beijing Declaration

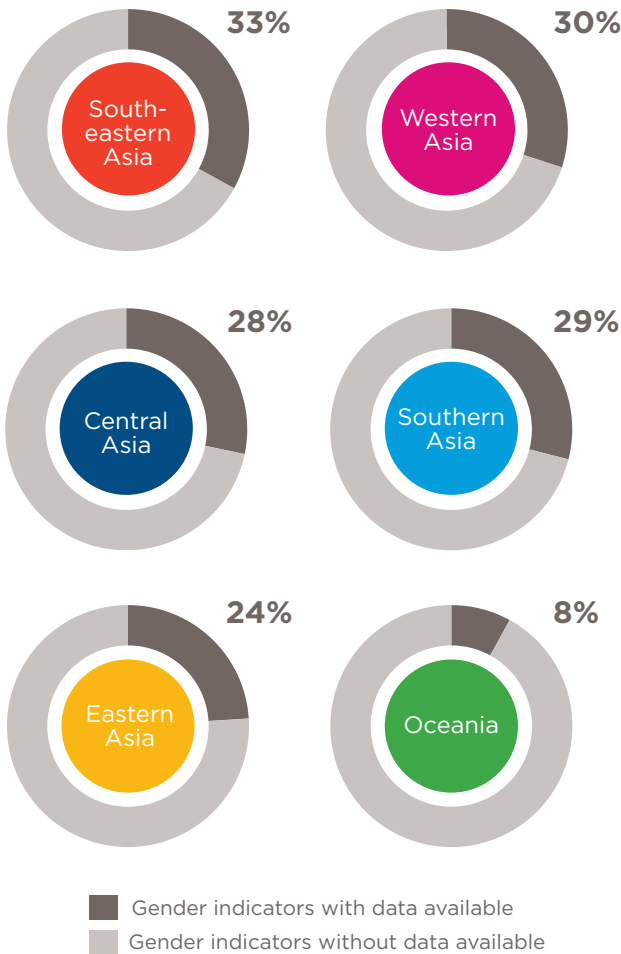
# Participation, Accountability and Gender-responsive Institutions

No country has achieved parity in government...



Latest data available since 2017.  
SDG Indicator 5.5.1: Proportion of elected seats held by women in (a) national parliaments (single and lower chambers) and (b) deliberative bodies of local government (%).

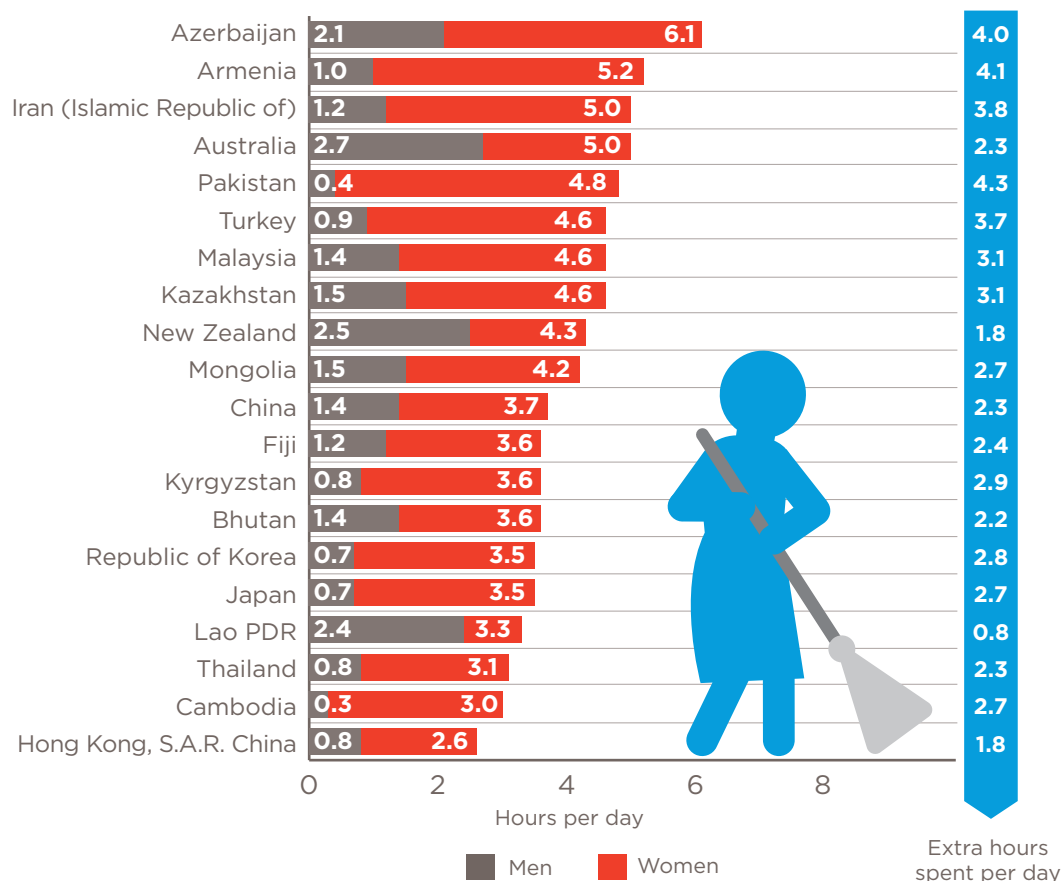
...and gender data is largely missing to inform decision making.



Proportion of gender-specific SDG indicators with at least one available data point since 2010.

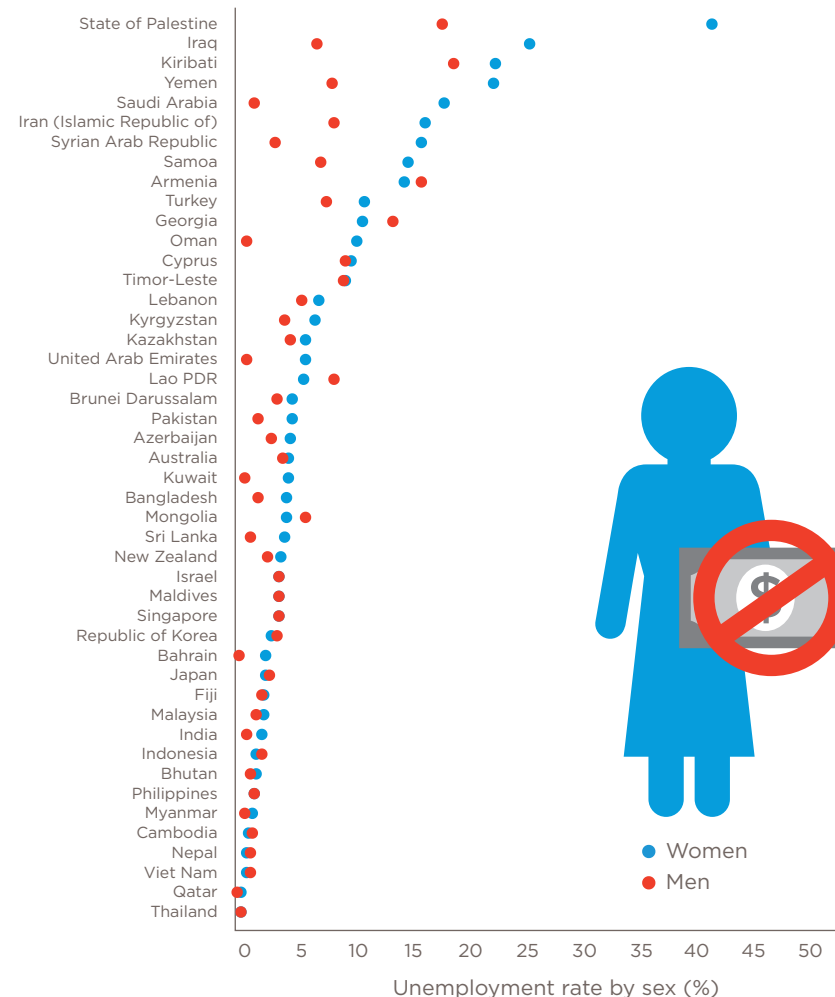
# Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity and Decent Work

Women spend more time per day than men on unpaid care and domestic work...



Latest data available since 2008.  
SDG indicator 5.4.1: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic chores and care work, by sex (%).  
Age group: 15+, except Kyrgyzstan (12+), Pakistan (10+), Malaysia (15-64), Cambodia (15-64), and Thailand (10+)

...and are more likely to be unemployed.



Latest available data since 2007.  
SDG indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, by sex and age (%).  
Age group: 25+

Unpaid care & domestic work

Unemployment

# Participation, Accountability and Gender-responsive Institutions

- The average proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments across the Asia-Pacific region has increased since 2000. However, progress remains uneven across countries.
- When data on the proportion of women in national parliaments is viewed with data on women's representation in local government, patterns vary widely across countries.
- No correlation was found between the shares of women's representation in local government and national parliaments respectively, in a given country.
- Electoral violence and discriminatory social norms continue keeping women away from decision making in politics.
- Gender data gaps are a key barrier to evidence-based decision-making in Asia and the Pacific, where data availability for gender-related SDG indicators is as low as 8 per cent in Oceania and only reaches 33 per cent in the subregion with highest availability, Southern Asia.
- Trend data is even less likely to be available, making it almost impossible to monitor progress for some indicators. In Oceania, for instance, only 3.3 per cent of gender-related SDG indicators have adequate data to conduct trend analysis from 2010 onwards.

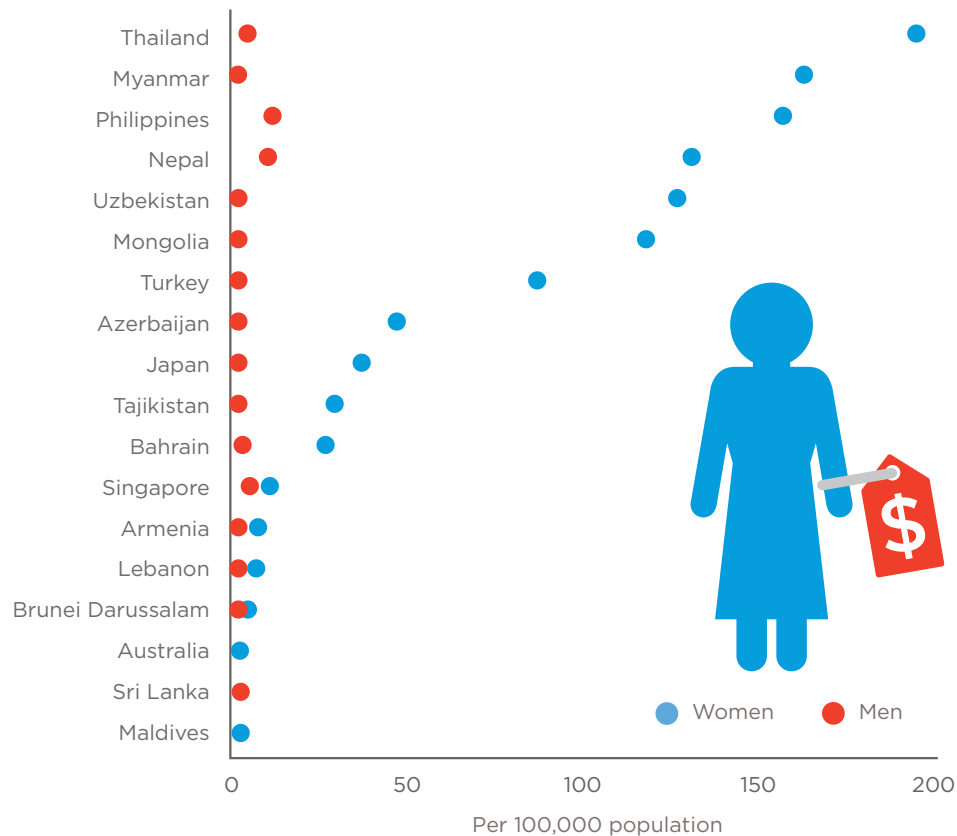


# Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity and Decent Work

- In most Asia-Pacific countries, the burden of unpaid care work is not divided equally between women and men, as such activities are traditionally determined by social roles as “women’s chores”
- Based on data available since 2010, on average women were found to spend at least 1.4 times the time men spend, on unpaid care and domestic work. In countries with the largest relative gaps, women were found to spend more than 11 times the time men spend on unpaid care and domestic work.
- Unpaid care and domestic work is often not classified as ‘work’ in national accounts and as a result, women’s contributions to the economy remain invisible. Yet, women’s unpaid care and domestic work subsidizes the cost of care that sustains families, supports economies and often fills in for the lack of public services.
- Female unemployment rates are also higher than male unemployment rates in most Asia-Pacific countries. In part, this is due to women’s engagement in unpaid care and domestic work, which reduces their opportunities to access paid employment.
- In only 12 Asia-Pacific countries female unemployment rates were lower than that of men (Armenia, Georgia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia, Nepal, Viet Nam, Thailand).
- In 5 of the countries with available data, female unemployment rates were more than double those of men. These countries are Samoa, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- Higher female unemployment rates have been associated with hiring practices that discriminate against females at the point of entry into the labor market, biased perceptions about women and their suitability for specific occupations, and discrimination associated with potential pregnancy and motherhood.

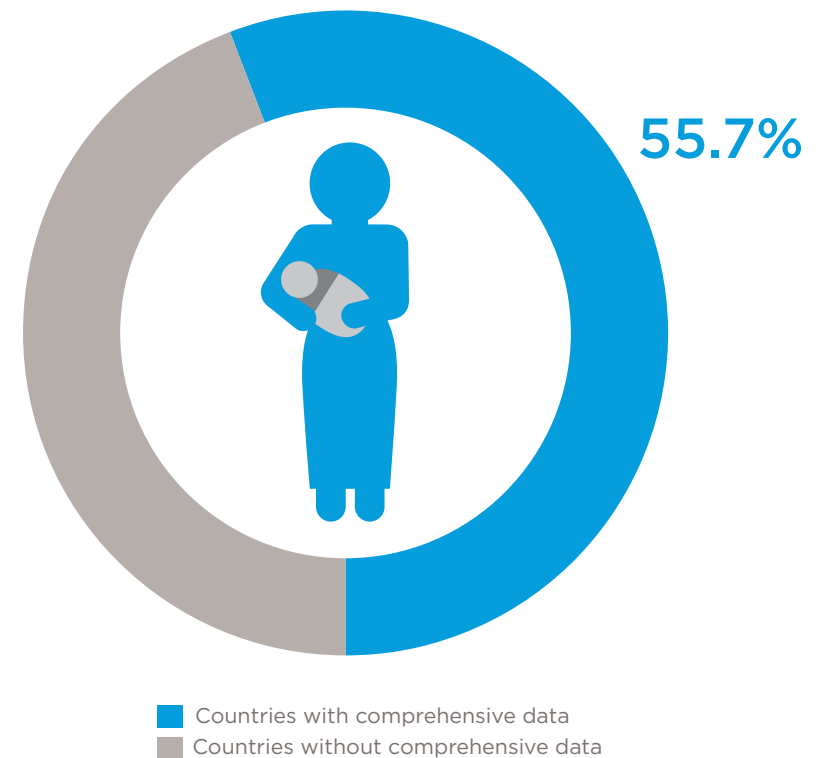
# Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Women are more likely to be victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation than men.



Latest data available since 2010.  
SDG Indicator 16.2.2: Detected victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation, by sex (per 100,000 population). Age group: all ages.

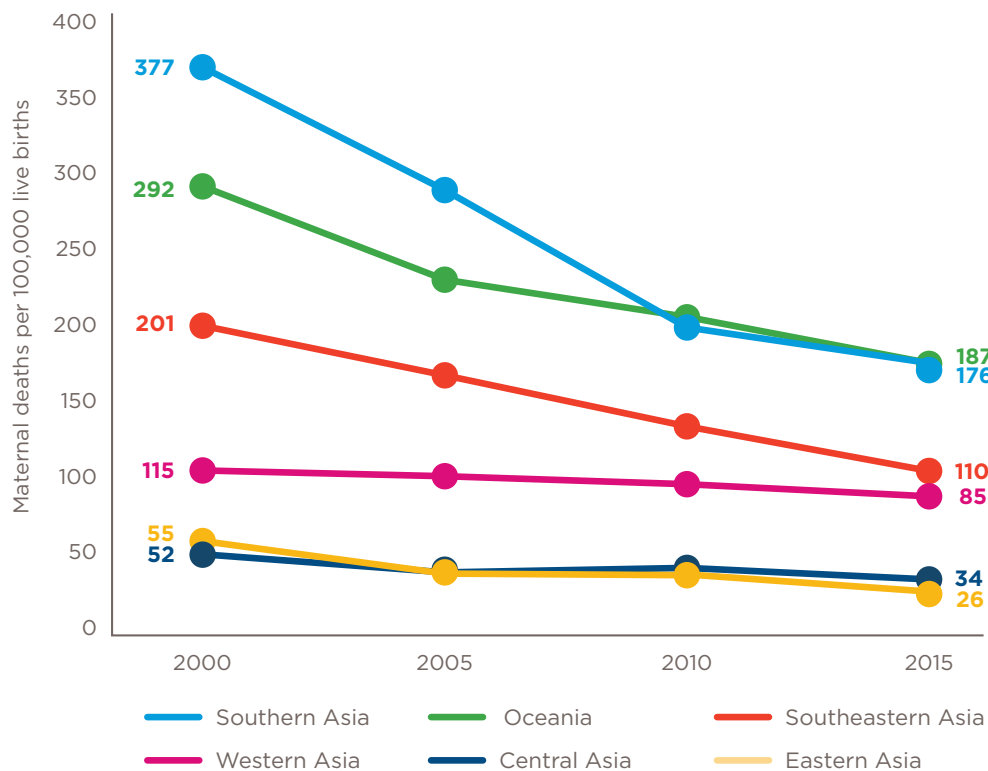
Birth registration data is inadequate, leaving many women without access to justice and services.



2017 aggregate.  
For Asia-Pacific region only.  
SDG indicator 17.19.2b: Number of countries with birth registration data that are at least 90 per cent complete.

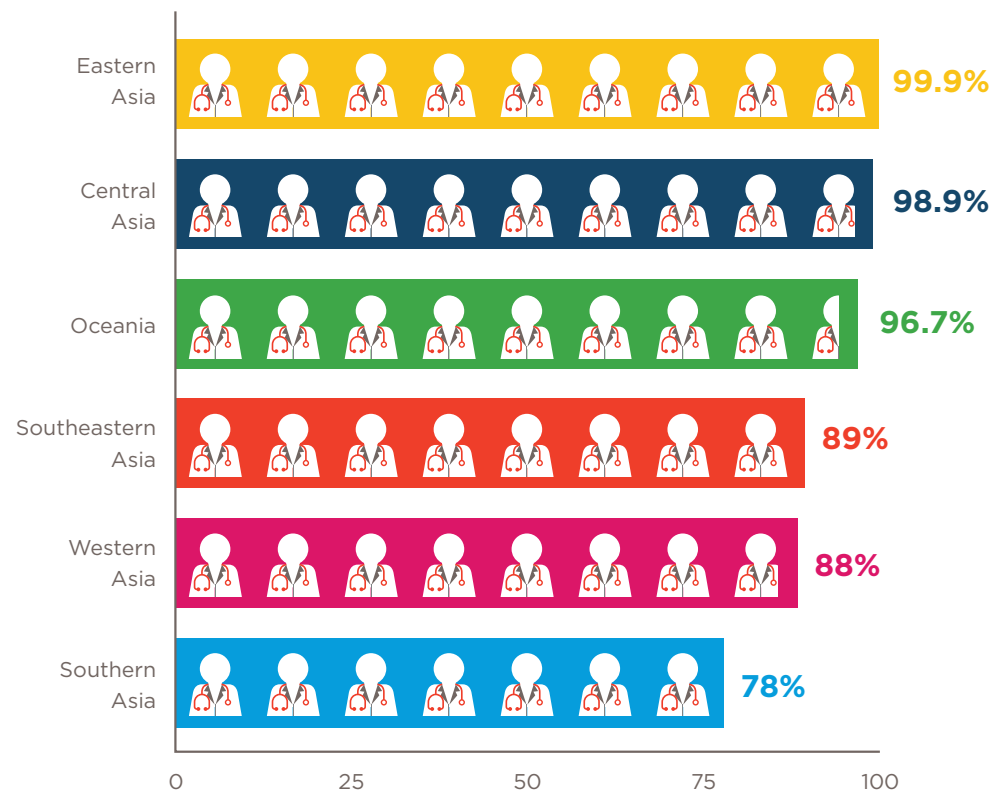
# Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Social Services

## Maternal mortality is dropping.



SDG indicator 3.1.1: Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)

## Overall, a high proportion of births are attended by skilled personnel.



2018 aggregates.  
SDG indicator 3.1.2: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)

Maternal mortality

Health services

# Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

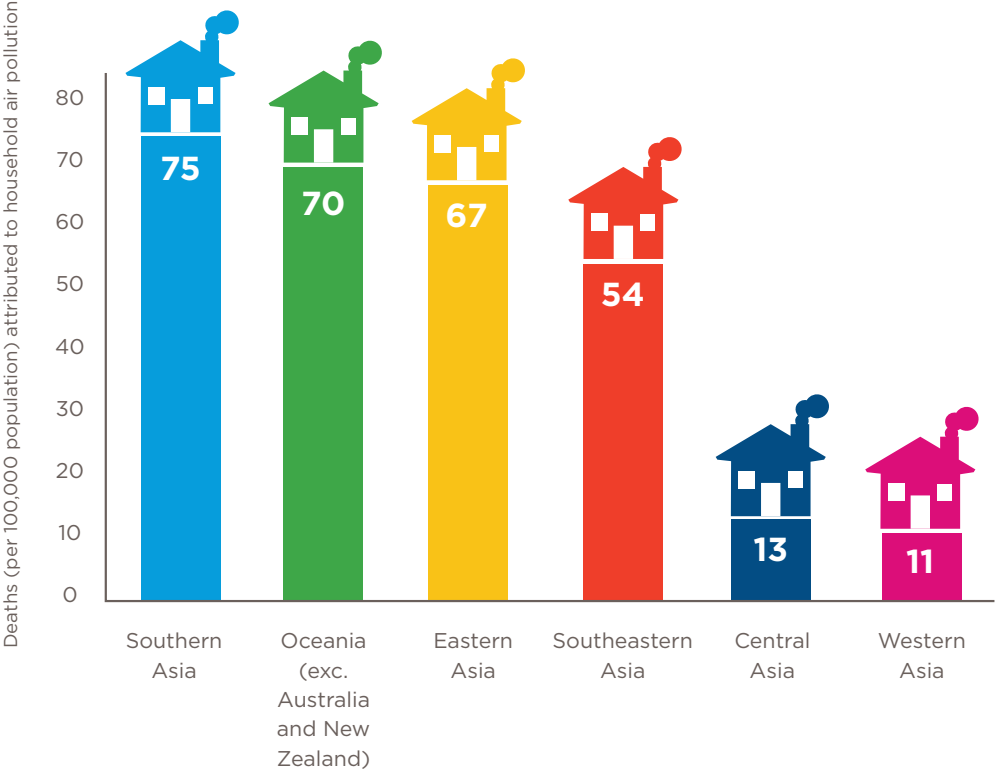
- Women make up the large majority of detected victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation in Asia and the Pacific.
- Their greater vulnerability to trafficking is connected to higher likelihood of poverty, unemployment, and discrimination. Low decision-making power, unequal inheritance rights and vulnerability to violence also play a role in enhancing women's vulnerability to trafficking.
- Birth registration has long been recognized as a fundamental human right. Along with proof of birth, it also confers and enables access to public benefits such as health care, social services, protection, and other civic rights. The right to birth registration is affirmed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and research has shown that birth registration rates are correlated with socio-economic status, household poverty, and maternal autonomy, as well as bargaining power within a household.
- Whereas 83.8 per cent of countries in Western Asia had complete birth registration data in 2017, less than 40 per cent of countries in Southern Asia and South-eastern Asia had complete birth registration statistics.

# Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Social Services

- Asia-Pacific countries have achieved remarkable gains in reducing maternal mortality ratios (MMR), with the greatest overall reduction achieved in Southern Asia, where the ratio more than halved, from 377 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 176 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015.
- Southern Asia, however, remains the sub-region with one of the highest maternal mortality and lowest prevalence of skilled attendance at birth.
- Deaths due to pregnancy and childbirth related causes are often preventable through quality antenatal, obstetric and perinatal care – including care given by midwives and skilled birth attendants.
- However, discriminatory practices against women can aggravate the risks. For instance, lack of decision-making power about own health care, neglect of women's nutritional needs and heavy work burdens all contribute to maternal mortality.
- Across Asia-Pacific countries, women's access to assisted delivery by skilled health personnel has also improved significantly since 2003, contributing to the drop in maternal mortality.
- Over 70 per cent of births are attended by skilled health personnel across all sub-regions, with the highest rate of coverage being in Eastern Asia at 99.9 per cent.
- Women's access to skilled perinatal care plays a crucial role in ensuring safe delivery by early detection of any birth complications, saving the lives of mothers and newborns. Skilled health workers can recognize the onset of complications, support their timely management and treatment and perform essential interventions.
- In addition to saving lives, care by skilled health personnel can also avert long-term disabilities associated with birth complications.

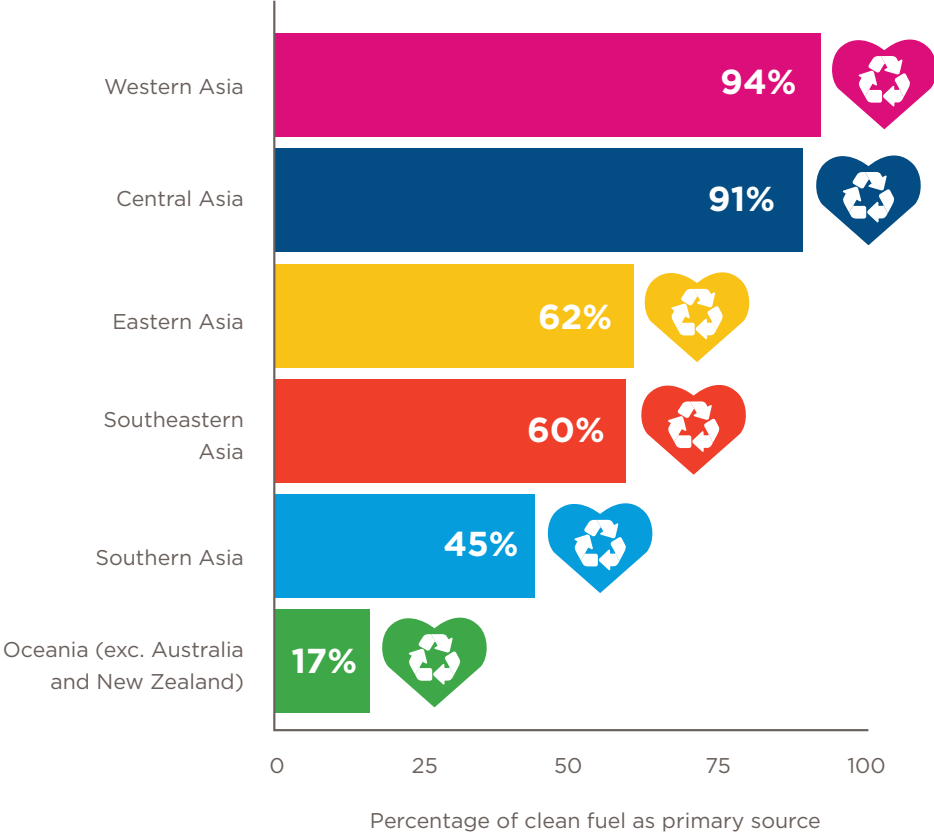
# Environmental Conservation, Climate Action and Resilience-building

Indoor air pollution affects women disproportionately, as they spend more time at home and are often in charge of cooking...



2016 aggregates.  
SDG indicator 3.9.1a: Crude mortality rate attributed to household air pollution (per 100,000 population).

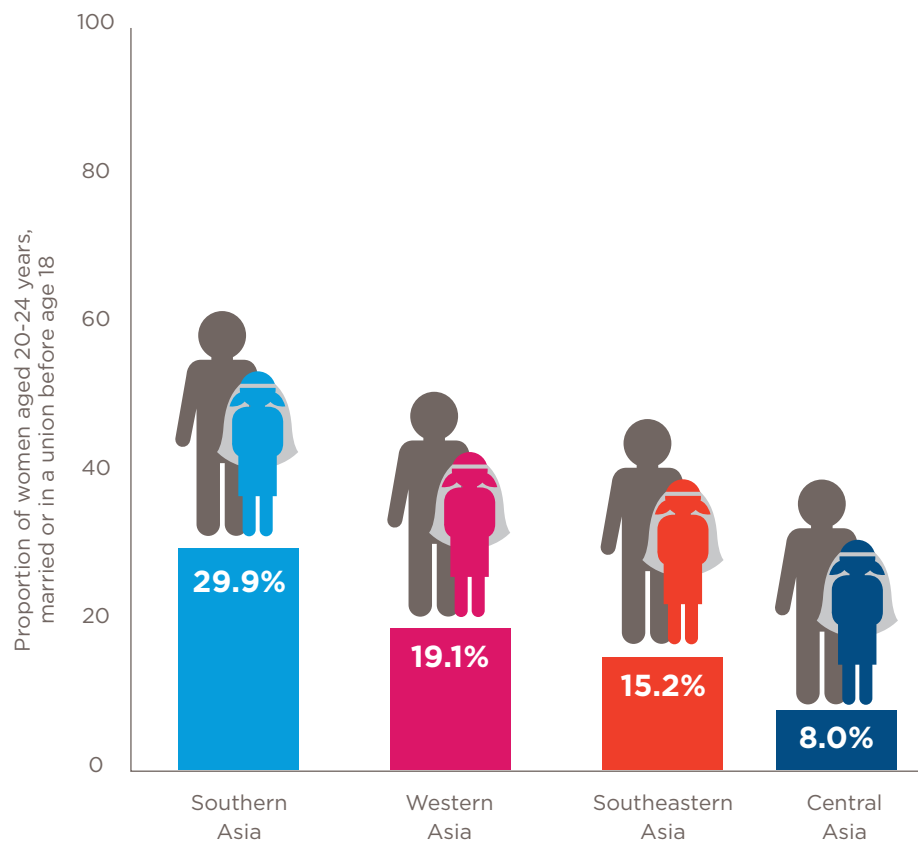
...but use of clean cooking fuels is still far from widespread.



2017 aggregates.  
SDG indicator 7.1.2: Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology (%).

# Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

**Child marriage  
is still widespread,  
especially in Southern Asia.**



2018 aggregates.  
SDG 5.3.1. Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 (%).

**In some regions as many as  
3 out of 10 women experienced  
intimate partner violence  
in the last 12 months.**



2017 aggregates.  
SDG Indicator 5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, (%)

**Child marriage**

**Violence**

# Environmental Conservation, Climate Action and Resilience-building

- Few of the indicators in the SDG framework capture environmental issues from a gender perspective. However, ensuring women benefit from natural resources and play a leading role in environmental conservation is key to ensuring sustainability.
- Indoor air pollution affects women disproportionately, as they are often in charge of cooking and other household chores and tend to spend more time indoors than men.
- In Southern Asia, Oceania and Eastern Asia, mortality rates associated with indoor air pollution are worryingly high. These are partly attributed to the use of unclean fuels for cooking and household heating, but also to poor air quality in factories, at the workplace and even outdoors.
- Women are actively leading climate action and are integral to environmental conservation. However, more gender-responsive climate, disaster management and energy policies are needed to ensure they benefit from and manage natural resources sustainably.
- The use of unclean fuels for cooking and heating the household is highly correlated with indoor air pollution at home. Thus, this indicator implicitly captures a gender issue.
- In Oceania, only 17 per cent of households use clean cooking fuels, putting women in the Pacific at severe risk of respiratory illness and other detrimental health effects.
- The use of firewood, animal dung or biomass for cooking and heating the household also affects women's use of time, as they are most often in charge of collecting such fuels.



# Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

- Within Asia and the Pacific, Southern Asia currently shows the highest prevalence of child marriage, which is defined as the share of women ages 20 to 24 that established their first cohabitation before turning 18.
- Child marriage is extremely detrimental for women, who often see their agency and opportunities for education and professional growth hampered as a result of early pregnancies and barriers to decision making.
- As child marriage is correlated with lower pay, worse jobs, and reduced asset ownership, women who married as children are also more vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and economic downturn, with limited ability to cope with shocks
- In Asia and the Pacific, the levels of intimate partner violence remain unacceptably high, with wide variations across sub-regions.
- Prevalence rates are highest in Oceania, where more than 3 in every 10 women fell victims of such violence in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- As instances of violence are consistently underreported, these estimates are undoubtedly lower than the actual prevalence rates.
- Diverse groups of women suffer from multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities, making them especially vulnerable to violence. Those factors include age, ethnicity, poverty, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, nationality, migratory status and other factors. Violence against women and girls limits human development and has serious negative consequences, ranging from multiple immediate to long-term physical, sexual, psychological and social impacts, which often prevent women and girls from fully participating in society.

## **Sources**

Global SDG Indicators Database. Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>. Accessed on October 3, 2019

UN Women (2018), Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018>. Accessed on October 3, 2019.

UN Women Data Availability Calculation with dataset from Global SDG Indicators Database, downloaded on August 21, 2019

Statistical Annex of Special Edition of the Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report (E/2019/68).

## **End Note**

Regional aggregates have been extracted from the Global SDG report and its statistical annex. Regional groupings therefore are calculated using official SDG regions.