

GENDER EQUALITY

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ABOUT THE HABITAT COMMITMENT INDEX

The Habitat Commitment Index is a composite score of the performance of 15 indicators at the country level that are essential to urban well-being, weighted by per capita GDP. It seeks to measure the fulfillment of commitments made by countries in the Habitat Agenda adopted at the Habitat II conference in 1996.

METHODOLOGY

The HCI takes into account all available historical data over the past 25 years to predict, at any income level, the maximum level of achievement a country may be expected to meet using a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 indicating not necessarily 100% fulfillment of an indicator, but 100% of the predicted maximum potential for a given per capita GDP.

The Habitat Commitment Index is based on the SERF methodology as described in *Fulfilling Social and Economic Rights* by Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Terra Lawson-Remer, and Susan Randolph, published by Oxford University Press in 2015.

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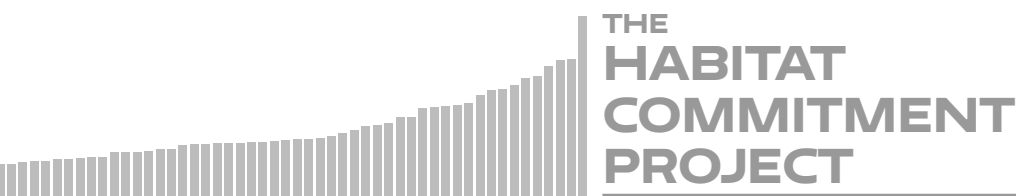
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I. MAIN FINDINGS

1. Overall, gender equality shows the greatest improvements in the HCI since Habitat II.

Gender equality has increased by 8.6 HCI points since Habitat II, with countries at the global level now performing at just over three quarters of their maximum capacity. This compares with the average HCI score of 69.1 points in 1996 (meaning the world on average was performing around 70% of its potential given available resources), with scores increasing to 77.7 HCI points in 2014.

2. Globally, the tertiary education HCI improved most significantly.

The rise in the gender HCI in part is due to the phenomenal increase in the *Female tertiary school enrollment* indicator, which rose by 22.13 points, while the *No lifetime risk of maternal death* HCI increased by 4.1 points, and the *Non-agricultural employment* HCI increased by 1.33 points.

3. There is limited statistical relationship between gender indicators and GDP performance.

Indicators of improvement in gender equality only depend to a limited extent on a country's GDP capacity. 35 of the 46 indicators that were analyzed showed no correlation with GDP per capita. This suggests that factors other than economic performance influence gender equality.

4. Global evidence is severely restricted; of 46 indicators, only three fulfill HCI requirements.

Those showing a significant relationship to GDP per capita and fulfilling data availability requirements are as follows:

- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (% of total non-agricultural employment)
- Lifetime risk of maternal mortality
- Female gross enrollment in tertiary education

5. Across countries, performance since Habitat II has been mixed.

While some countries show significant progress, others have performed worse in recent years than in 1996.

- **Turkey** made the greatest improvements in the three HCI indicators relative to its capacity, followed by **Yemen, Greece, Iceland, and Mongolia**. Turkey's composite gender HCI increased from 44 to 75 points, largely attributed to the gender education HCI, which increased by 53 points. Turkey's gender employment HCI improved significantly too, by about 36 points, while its gender health HCI increased only slightly, by 3.3 points.
- **Egypt, Georgia, and Morocco** performed significantly worse in all three gender HCI indicators in recent years than in 1996, with a decreasing HCI score by more than 12 points.
- **Israel** had the largest drop by about 20 points, decreasing from 82 points in 1996, to 62 points in 2013. Israel's decrease can largely be attributed to its drastic drop in the HCI of *Female non-agricultural employment* (-79 points); the HCI of *Lifetime risk of maternal death* remained unchanged (0.17), the *Female tertiary school enrollment indicator* increased (21 points).

6. When disaggregated by individual HCI indicators different countries show variations in level of achievement.

The *Female non-agricultural employment* shows that Yemen had the greatest increase with 64 points; Turkey, Cambodia, Lesotho, and Zambia also increased significantly by around 25 points. In contrast, Latin America and the Caribbean saw a decline of -3.8 HCI points, with 13 of 29 nations showing a decline. At the other end of the spectrum are Israel, the Dominican Republic, Morocco, and Ethiopia, who experienced decreasing HCI scores by more than 50 points.

Since 1996 Habitat II, the *Lifetime risk of maternal mortality* indicator has been widely and consistently reported, with a total of 184 nations collecting data and a total of 3661 observations. Overall, low-income countries have higher reporting. With the inverse of the indicator, namely *No risk of maternal mortality* considered desirable, the global average performance for 'No risk' is relatively high, with an HCI of 84. Europe and Central Asia rank highest, with Sub-Saharan African countries lowest. Among low-income countries, Sierra Leone ranks lowest with an HCI of 83, while Burkina Faso has one of the highest HCI scores with 98.

Data on the *Female tertiary school enrollment* indicator has been collected by 183 countries reporting 2075 observations since 1996. In recent years, Europe scored highest of all regions; Sub-Saharan Africa scored lowest. Among low-income countries Indonesia is the highest performer with an HCI of 33, Chad the lowest with an HCI of 0.6. Changes since Habitat II are remarkable; Albania increased its HCI for tertiary enrollment by 75 points, Iceland by 65 points, and Chile by 56 points. Some countries, however, experienced lower performances; Georgia decreased its HCI by 38 points, Panama by 12 points, and the Philippines by about 2 points. Overall, only 10 countries show decreasing HCI scores in female tertiary education.

7. Globally, many countries have failed to fulfill their Habitat II gender data commitment.

The Habitat II Agenda (1996, p. 29) endorses country commitment in "collecting, analyzing and disseminating gender-disaggregated data and information on human settlements issues." But the 2016 situation is very disappointing. Only 95 of the 183 analyzed countries reported data on all three HCI gender indicators.

Who collects the data?

Since 2006 the UN Statistics Division has held six conferences to enhance national and international agencies' capacity to collect gender data. This has resulted in an international standard for a set of 'conceptually clear indicators' with associated methodology. A 'minimum set of 52 gender indicators' is split into the five subcategories of economic, education, health, human rights of women and girl children, and public life and decision-making.

Different subcategory data is collected by a range of international agencies including ILO; OECD; ITU; UIS; WHO; UNICEF; UNDP; UNAIDS; IPU; UNODC. UN-Women does not collect any quantitative information on women.

15 indicators were used to track the MDGs, but were unevenly implemented; reporting and monitoring mechanisms varied significantly by region. At least 31 of the 52 indicators were disaggregated by female, male, children, and age. Those not disaggregated or connect to the MDGs were not recorded at all by countries or too sparse for inference on progress. Many of the data sets were not adequate for the HCI methodology; ultimately, therefore, it could only use three indicators.

Figure 1. Gender data collection

Since Habitat II no Latin American or Southeast Asian country has collected data on women's rural or urban land ownership, or housing titles. Of the three HCI gender indicators, maternal mortality has the highest reporting rate since 1996; all 183 countries had data for both the baseline (1996 to 2000) and most recent years (2010 to 2015). It is also the indicator with highest improvements in data collection since Habitat II. This may be attributed to the fact that maternal mortality was a foundational indicator in the MDG Goal 5 of improving maternal health, contributing to international emphasis on recording.

8. Regional variations exist in reporting on the three HCI Gender Indicators

The Middle East and North Africa (95%) has the highest rates, closely followed by Europe and Central Asia (94%). Then comes South Asia (89%) Latin America and Caribbean (80%) East Asia and Pacific (77%), with Sub-Saharan Africa (68%) the lowest report rates.

9. Very few of the indicators are relevant to the 1996 Habitat Agenda.

The three indicators that fulfilled HCI requirements are not necessarily those that are the most relevant in assessing Habitat II commitments. The following three indicators, despite a lack of relationship to GDP per capita and lack of data availability, nevertheless are important given their relevance to the Habitat II Agenda.

- **Representation in government and leading position**

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments is a widely recognized gender equality indicator, with approximately 185 countries collecting data since 1990. Although this data shows some improvements since 1996, overall findings are disappointing. Globally, across all GDP per capita categories, women occupy less than 15% of seats in parliament in the majority of countries; Rwanda reported the most seats in 2014 with 64%, closely followed by Bolivia, Cuba, Sweden, and Senegal. In contrast, the Middle East did not report a single female legislator since Habitat II.

Female legislators, senior officials, and managers is a second relevant indicator. A total of 118 countries reported data between 1990 and 2015, with middle and high-income countries collecting more data than lower-income countries. The global average at 29% is low, with most observations ranging between 11% and 50%; Hungary reported the highest level in 1996 (64%).

- **Urban land / housing ownership**

Embedded in the Habitat II Declaration is the development of human settlements, housing, and access to land. Thus the most important urban gender indicator is gender disaggregated housing ownership, identifying either joint or single ownership. Since 1996, few countries have collected such data; of the 42 observations recorded, most are in newly urbanizing African countries. Results are very low; most countries reported female land ownership rates of less than 10%; Cameroon reported the highest with 25.8% in 2011; while Jordan reported a 0% land or housing ownership by women.

- **Female household headship**

Female household headship is important when linked to women's empowerment. This indicator was first introduced in 1996 but since then only 192 observations have been recorded, mostly in lower middle-income countries. The global average for this indicator is 24%; the maximum point reached over 24 years is 49%. In 2011, women headed 44.6% of households in Zimbabwe, 40.6% in Haiti (2012), 40% in the Dominican Republic (2013), 34% in Colombia (2010), and 28.1% in Honduras (2012). The fact that the majority of countries that have reported high rates of female headship are post crisis/conflict contexts means that female headship may not necessarily be positive, and more representative as a poverty indicator.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Closing the achievement gap of urban gender equality:

Despite the fact that gender equality has achieved the greatest HCI improvements since Habitat II, the overall score shows that countries are still only performing at around 78% of their maximum capacity. This overall HCI score means that there is considerable potential to close the achievement gap and put countries on track towards full realization of targets for gender equality. It is of critical importance, therefore, that strategies to address this gap are incorporated into the NUA.

2. Understanding the drivers of urban gender equality:

This study revealed that indicators of improvements in gender equality only depend to a limited extent on a country's GDP capacity. Therefore, to better understand drivers of gender equality, future research should focus on factors other than economic performance that yield to improved results, especially in employment and urban development associated with housing and land ownership.

3. Identifying appropriate tools of implementation:

While the HCI study has measured success and failure in achieving greater gender equality based on three indicators, it has not been able to identify how such results have been achieved. For instance, Turkey is one of the best performing countries with regard to gender equality since Habitat II. It is now necessary to identify the policies and programs that resulted in this high level of improvement. Such information would provide member states with practical tools for implementation that in turn could have a more meaningful impact than a set of ideal outcomes.

4. Attacking data poverty by serious commitment and resource allocation for improving gender-disaggregated data:

The study results are severely overshadowed by the severe lack of data – despite that call in Habitat II to address this issue. The evidence base is shocking- only three of the 46 indicators analyzed fulfilled data requirements, with just 95 of the 183 countries reporting data on the three HCI gender indicators. In the current (and final) draft of the NUA, sex disaggregated data is only one of seven, or even nine, disaggregation categories requested (2016, p. 20, 21). Not only does gender disaggregated urban data deserve a stand alone commitment, Habitat III also needs to ensure that the call for gender data does not remain at the rhetorical level, as it has in Habitat II, but includes technical and financial mechanisms for implementation.

5. Developing urban-specific gender indicators:

In addition to recommendation 4 above, is the urgent need to identify and include a set of gender indicators that specifically relate to gender equality in cities. If the NUA is to effectively address this issue, there must be sufficient means to collect data disaggregated by gender and age, and record progress made against commitments. As mentioned above, these include gender equality in land and housing ownership titles, gendered representation in governments and legislative positions, as well as less defined areas relating to urban space and safety.

IV. REFERENCES

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