



ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality

Implementing the ILO policy on gender equality

to achieve decent work for

both women and men



International
Labour
Office
Geneva





“Since 1999, the ILO policy on gender equality has been operationalized through successive Action Plans. After so many years, is a Gender Action Plan still needed? I have no doubt that it is. Gender equality is not only an inherent value of the ILO, but perhaps more than ever, strong ILO leadership is needed in this area, as major gender gaps in the world of work persist. Recent ILO data shows that millions of women are losing ground in the quest for equality in the world of work. There is no time for complacency and no time to waste. And the ILO must lead by example.”

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder

What is the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality?

The Action Plan, mandated by the ILO policy on gender equality, is a strategic tool to help achieve the goal of equality between women and men in the world of work. Each Action Plan focuses on results and is linked to the organization's strategic framework and corresponding programme and budgets. The Action Plan uses targets for indicators, which are developed in consultation with strategic departments. These business owners track and regularly report on progress in meeting targets as well as remedial action taken for any gaps.

The Action Plan is designed to help ILO Constituents – governments, and workers' and employers' organizations – in their contributions to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 including on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, obtaining decent work for all, and reducing inequality. The SDGs are also linked to results indicators in the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), with which the ILO Action Plan is aligned.

For ILO staff, the Action Plan is a key tool for identifying and addressing opportunities to reinforce equality between women and men and to reduce gender inequality in the world of work. The Action Plan identifies internal mainstreaming strategies for which progress is measured on staffing, substance and structure. These directly impact effectiveness in achieving targets for the outcomes set out in the programme and budgets.

Business owners in the Action Plan include:

- *Senior Management Team*
- *Deputy Directors-General*
- *Human Resources Development Department (HRD)*
- *Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM)*
- *Evaluation Office (EVAL)*
- *Internal Audit and Oversight Office (IAO)*
- *Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV)*
- *Financial Management Department (FINANCE)*
- *Research Department (RESEARCH)*
- *Department of Communication (DCOMM)*

Why have an Action Plan?

Promoting gender equality is at the heart of the ILO's social justice mandate. In its Constitution in 1919, the preamble specifically mentions women as well as equal remuneration for work of equal value. This commitment has been reaffirmed in many international labour standards, declarations and resolutions – all of which aim to help ensure gender equality through women's equal opportunities and treatment in labour markets.

The ILO gender equality policy, launched in 1999, identifies as its operational tool an Action Plan which should be developed using a consultative process involving staff at different levels across field offices and at headquarters. The policy, for which the updated version is annexed in the Action Plan 2016-17, highlights the above-mentioned priority areas – staffing, substance and structure – and stresses that ILO should take a leading role in achievement of gender equality.

Who is the Action Plan for?

The Action Plan's direct audience are headquarters and field-based staff, in order to guide them in addressing gender in all their work at all levels. The ultimate beneficiaries are the tripartite constituents. Other stakeholders include development partners, academics and experts, UN staff, and civil society representatives.

“As an organization dedicated to fundamental human rights and social justice, the ILO must take a leading role in international efforts to promote and realize gender equality.”

ILO policy on gender equality

What does the Action Plan aim to achieve?

The Action Plan tracks progress or gaps including on results, leadership, programming, development cooperation, resource tracking and allocation, and gender architecture and parity. Progress is also tracked on organizational culture, capacity assessment, capacity development, knowledge generation and communication, monitoring and reporting, evaluation, auditing and coherence.

How is the Action Plan implemented?

A multi-pronged implementation strategy includes the following.

- **Linking with and strengthening organization-wide efforts**
such as the 2016-17 ILO strategic framework's cross-cutting policy driver on gender equality and non-discrimination. For example, the Action Plan 2016-17 tracks country programme outcomes that are scored as gender-responsive.
- **Focusing on results at national level**
in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP), through which ILO contributes technical expertise and practical support. Since 2008 the Action Plans have tracked the extent to which DWCP indicators are gender-inclusive.

- **Leveraging transparency and dialogue**

so that more-visible achievements are scaled up – and lessons learned are highlighted for more effective efforts going forward. Transparency with the Governing Body about results of independent evaluations of Action Plans, including gaps, enables constituents to better guide ILO on designing and implementing subsequent ones. This also helps promote an organizational culture for inclusive and constructive social dialogue at all levels about gender equality.

- **Communication and knowledge sharing about strategies in global networks**

such as among the some-40 UN entities with UN-SWAP aligned Action Plans, gives ILO an opportunity to share lessons learned and advocate for gender-responsive world-of-work approaches on SDGs. Good practices and strategies linked to the Action Plan are also promoted at knowledge-sharing events and academies including at the Turin-based UN campus and ILO International Training Centre. These are some of the components of the Action Plan's communication strategy.

To whom are results of the Action Plan reported?

The Governing Body – which the ILO gender equality policy states must be kept fully informed of progress in implementing Action Plans – plays a critical and proactive governance role when reviewing implementation results. The Governing Body receives regular reports summarizing independent evaluations of Action Plan implementation, an evaluator's recommendations, and proposed approaches of subsequent Action Plans. During its discussion, the Governing Body gives strategic guidance based on the perspectives, experiences and needs of governments, and employers' and workers' organizations.

In addition to the ILO Governing Body, the results of annual monitoring of the Action Plan are provided to UN Women, which coordinates reporting to the General Assembly and other governance bodies such as the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). In 2012 this Board, comprised of United Nations agency heads and chaired by the Secretary-General, endorsed the UN-SWAP as the gender mainstreaming framework to be applied throughout the system. The Secretary-General's reports on gender mainstreaming to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which summarize results and trends for the UN-SWAP, have included some ILO good practices.

After the ILO Governing Body was informed in March 2016 about results of an independent evaluation of the Action Plan 2010-15 and the proposed approach of the Action Plan 2016-17, it:

- *asked the Director-General to finalize and implement the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-17 in light of the evaluation recommendations and taking into account the Governing Body's guidance;*
- *decided to examine implementation results of the Action Plan 2016-17 at a future Governing Body session at which it would provide guidance on the orientation of the upcoming Action Plan; and*
- *requested the ILO Director-General to “take into consideration its guidance in pursuing the ILO's mandate to promote gender equality in the implementation of the Programme and Budget for 2016-17, in preparing the next strategic framework and future programme and budget proposals, and in facilitating extra-budgetary resources.”*

Decision on the 11th item on the agenda: Results of the independent evaluation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-15 and outline of the ILO Action Plan 2016-17



Who is responsible for implementing the Action Plan, and who is accountable?

The ILO gender equality policy states that all ILO staff must participate, contribute and commit to implementing the Action Plan, while responsibility and accountability rests with senior managers, regional directors and programme managers.

The Gender Network – of field-based gender specialists, headquarters-based gender coordinators, and focal points across all offices and at headquarters – play a catalyst role.

The network is coordinated by the Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch, which supports implementation of the Action Plan with advisory services, knowledge sharing and some capacity building.

The ILO Director-General has ultimate responsibility for policy development and organizational performance on gender equality, as stated in the gender equality policy, and reports on Action Plan implementation to the Governing Body.

Headquarters-based departments that are business owners of the Action Plan indicators are responsible for tracking progress in meeting targets and providing relevant documentation.

Successive independent evaluations have identified bottlenecks at mid-management level, which is crucial to promoting gender equality by facilitating its incorporation in all work. For this reason the Governing Body has asked that accountability modalities be reinforced in the Action Plan, and the Action Plan spells out specific roles and responsibilities for implementation including accountability mechanisms.

Roles and responsibilities for enhancing gender equality in ILO work

Director-General	Ultimate responsibility for policy development and organizational performance on gender equality.
Deputy Directors-General	Accountable for implementing and monitoring gender equality in their respective portfolios of departments and relevant strategic objectives, and for ensuring that adequate human and financial resources are allocated to support gender equality work.
Regional Directors	Accountable for gender-responsive outcomes and indicators within regional priorities, including working with employer and worker specialists and other relevant staff and the gender specialists to strengthen constituents' capacity on promoting gender equality.
Field office Directors	Accountable for gender-responsive outcomes and indicators in programme areas, gender mainstreaming in Decent Work Country Programmes, and for promoting constituents' strengthened gender mainstreaming capacity through employer and worker specialists, other relevant staff and gender specialists.
Headquarters-based Directors and Chiefs	In implementing responsibilities delegated by Deputy Directors-General, accountable for ensuring that adequate human and financial resources are allocated to achieve gender responsive outcomes and indicators in programme areas.

Decent Work Country Programmes

Percentage of decent work country programmes that contain indicators of which at least 35% disaggregate by sex and/or are gender-inclusive

0%

2008-09

17%

2010-11

29%

2012-13

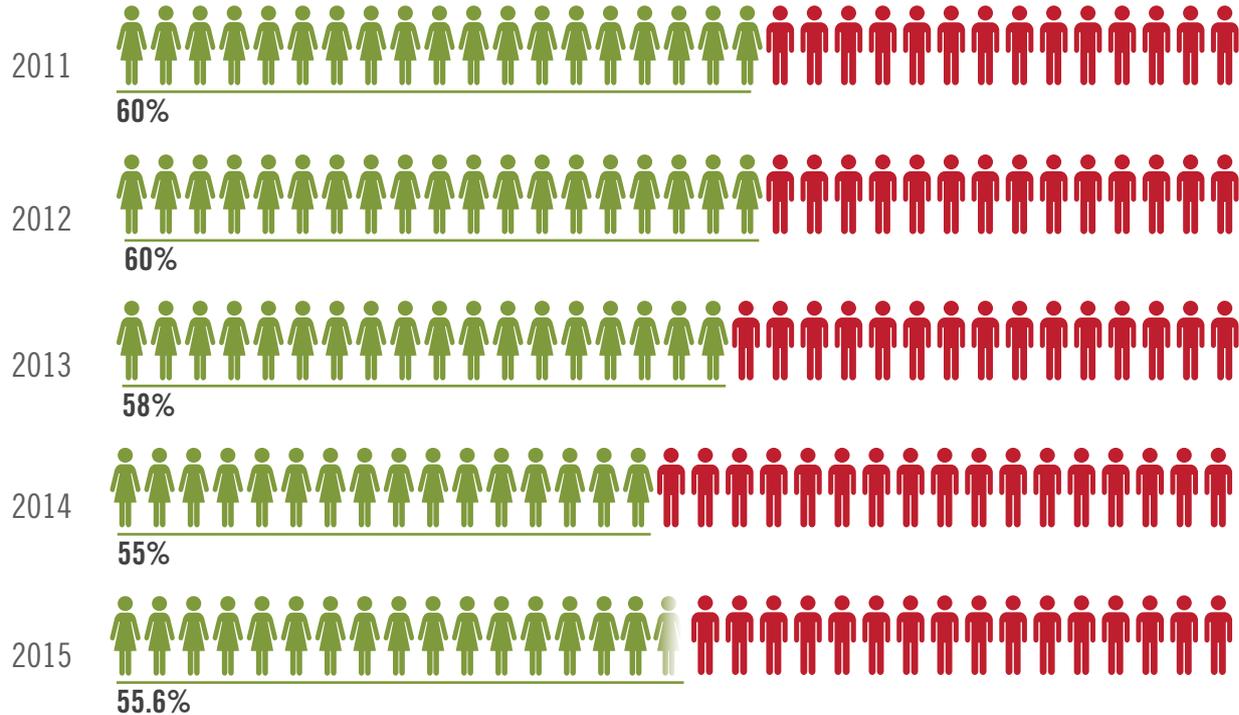
50%

2014-15



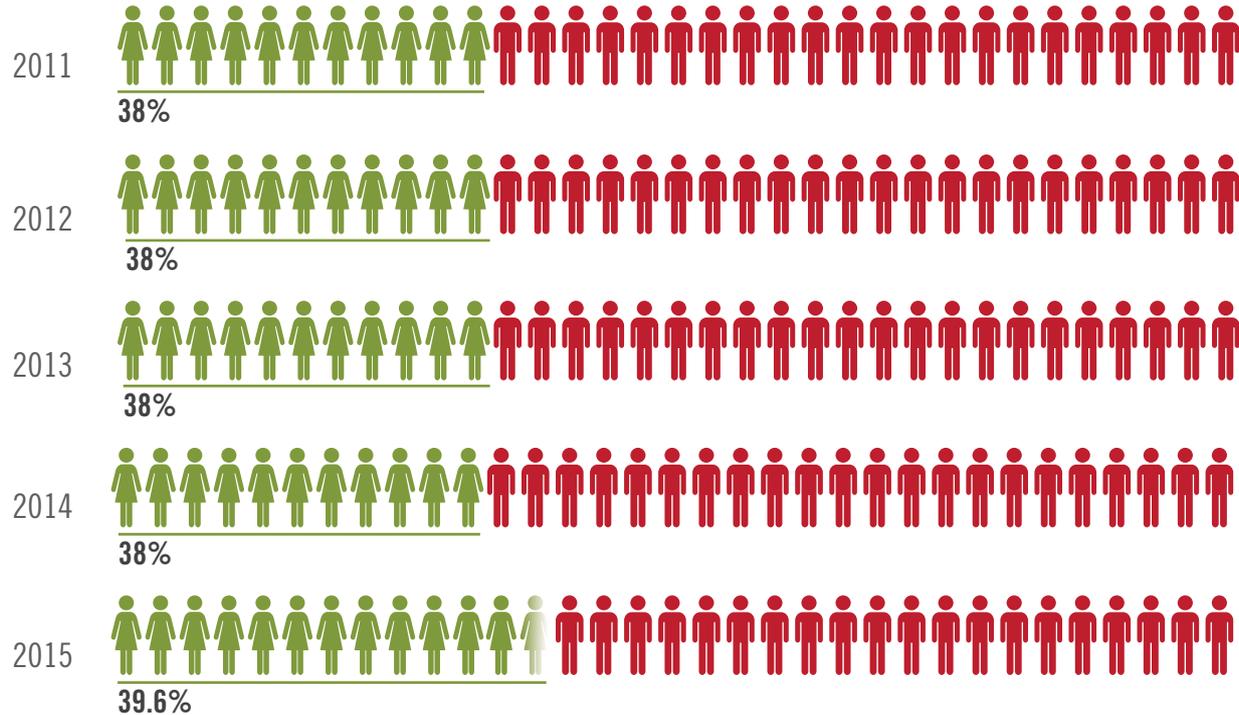
Women in ILO professional positions

Grades P2 to P4



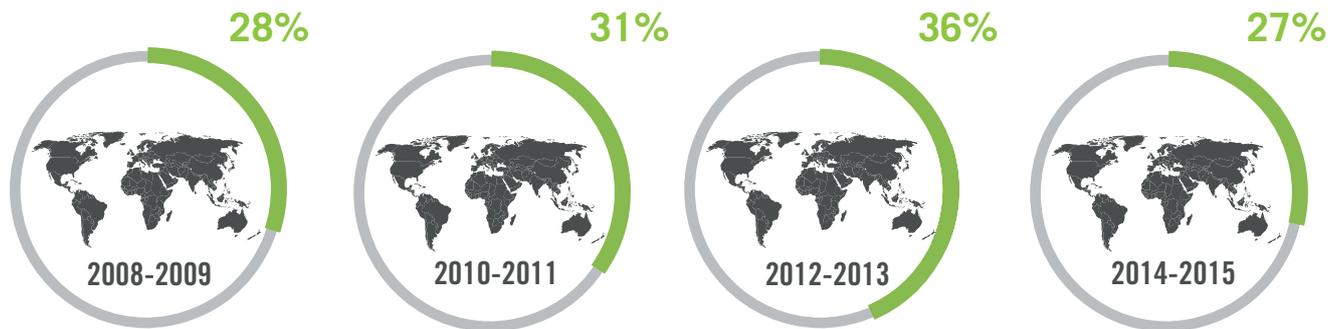
Women in ILO senior and management positions

Grades P5, D1 and D2



Gender-responsive development cooperation

Project “includes gender equality in outcomes and some outputs/activities specifically address gender issues” or “project’s main stated objective is to promote gender equality, and outcomes and activities are designed to promote gender equality.”



“The Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–17 is a results-based tool, fully aligned with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP). We have set measureable goals, including on enabling institutional mechanisms for which I intend to establish a clear line of accountability. We will be doing everything we can and must do – including through a strategic communication plan, and a clear focus on ownership and accountability – to show steady progress...I am confident that we will meet the challenge that we have set ourselves.”

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder



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