

Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders

Opening doors for women working
in government



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About the Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders

The Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders is intended to stimulate a global conversation about the policies, measures and role models that are needed to promote and retain the female talent that abounds in the public sector.

Our Index highlights issues of gender equity at senior leadership levels in the public sector across the globe. It begins with an analysis of women's representation in public sector leadership positions across G20 countries. We will revisit the research on an annual basis to track the progress that is being made towards achieving a more diverse and vibrant leadership for public sector organizations.

As we present this new report, we would like to thank all the government leaders from around the world and Ernst & Young professionals who have taken the time to share their insights with us.

www.ey.com/government/womenleaders



Research undertaken by Dods

Diversity. In our globalizing world diversity in leadership and decision making is crucial to delivering effective Government services and economic competitiveness. But while diverse teams are proven to stimulate innovation and new ways of problem solving, there is an increasing acknowledgment that much work remains to be done before governments and business become truly representative of the societies in which they operate and serve.

With one billion women expected to join the workforce, business leaders and take up leadership positions over the next decade, women are now seen as the next big emerging market – and one that governments around the world need to take account of. Most governments are aware of the benefits of promoting a more balanced gender mix in their leadership ranks and are actively advancing policies to address the gender deficit. Unfortunately, as in other sectors, the gender distribution across leadership roles in government is not representative of the number of women in the community, in the public sector workforce and in higher education.

Ernst & Young's study of senior public sector roles across G20 countries shows that only four of them reached even

one third representation of women in leadership roles, despite women constituting a significant part of the overall public sector workforce in many countries. Even in Canada, the country that ranked number one in our Index, they account for only 45% of its public sector leaders. No other country comes close to this figure, with the numbers of female leaders in the following six countries in the Index hovering at around a third.

Governments around the world are facing up to a rapidly changing world. Shifting demographics, urbanization and climate change, as well as the lingering effects of the financial crisis, demand great leaders at the decision-making table. Unleashing the talent of women can bring powerful positive change and increases the likelihood of better outcomes for us all.

I have worked in leadership roles across the public, private and non-government sectors and have witnessed first-hand the challenges encountered by women. I have also seen how diverse teams can lead to better decisions and results. Diversity of approaches, points of view and thinking contributes towards improved performance and in the Government and public sector we need this now more than ever.

Across the globe there are many women leaders in the public sector who have a great story to tell. I invite you to join us at www.ey.com/government/womenleaders to be inspired by the lives and ideas of some public sector women leaders who have joined Ernst & Young in this global initiative. I would love to hear your feedback and ideas about how to help women advance in both government and beyond. Please contact me at uschi.schreiber@hk.ey.com. I look forward to hearing from you.



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Setting the scene

Who leads the public sector is important. Its leaders make decisions that affect millions of people every day. Public sector leaders – politicians, civil servants and board members – are responsible for the general welfare of their citizens and give protection to the most vulnerable members of society.

On a local level, elected and paid officials oversee public services that benefit everyone, from local schools, transportation systems and leisure facilities, to the day-to-day business of living, dealing with the nitty-gritty of garbage collection, recycling and parking permits. And, importantly, public sector leaders in the 21st century are dealing with complex, long-term, systemic issues such as the economy, urbanization, globalization, aging populations, health care and climate change. Many of these issues demand new solutions to leave countries and their citizens better placed for the future.

From a business perspective, too, the issue of diversity is of fundamental performance. As countries around the world jostle for position in a world that is both competitive and shrinking, economic growth requires the efficient allocation of resources. But with half of the world's population prevented from making a full contribution, economic opportunities around the world continue to be restricted.

Diversity of thought, experience and perspective is needed to respond to these challenges. Unfortunately, women's access to the boardroom remains alarmingly limited, even in developed

markets. And in government, women hold just 20% of cabinet positions around the world and are twice as likely to hold a social portfolio as an economic one, according to our research. Hillary Rodham Clinton, the former US Secretary of State, alluded to these challenges at the launch of the Equal Futures Partnership in September 2012.

"We know that when women participate fully in their governments and economies, they and their families benefit, but so do their communities, their countries, and even the world as a whole," she told her audience. "In democracies, all people – women and men – have an equal voice and an equal vote and an equal chance to run for office and to serve their fellow citizens. In thriving economies, all people have an equal opportunity to start a business, own property, earn a fair wage, and support their families. And in stable and peaceful societies, all people's human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected equally."

Her comments have been echoed by Ruth Shaw, winner of the 2012 Public Service Award at the UK First Women Awards. "There is clearly a business case for equality," she said. "Organizations can only succeed and grow if the best talent is not only employed, but supported and developed. As long as 51% of the population is not represented at senior levels then we are missing out. And of course it is morally and socially right to have gender equality. It is fair."

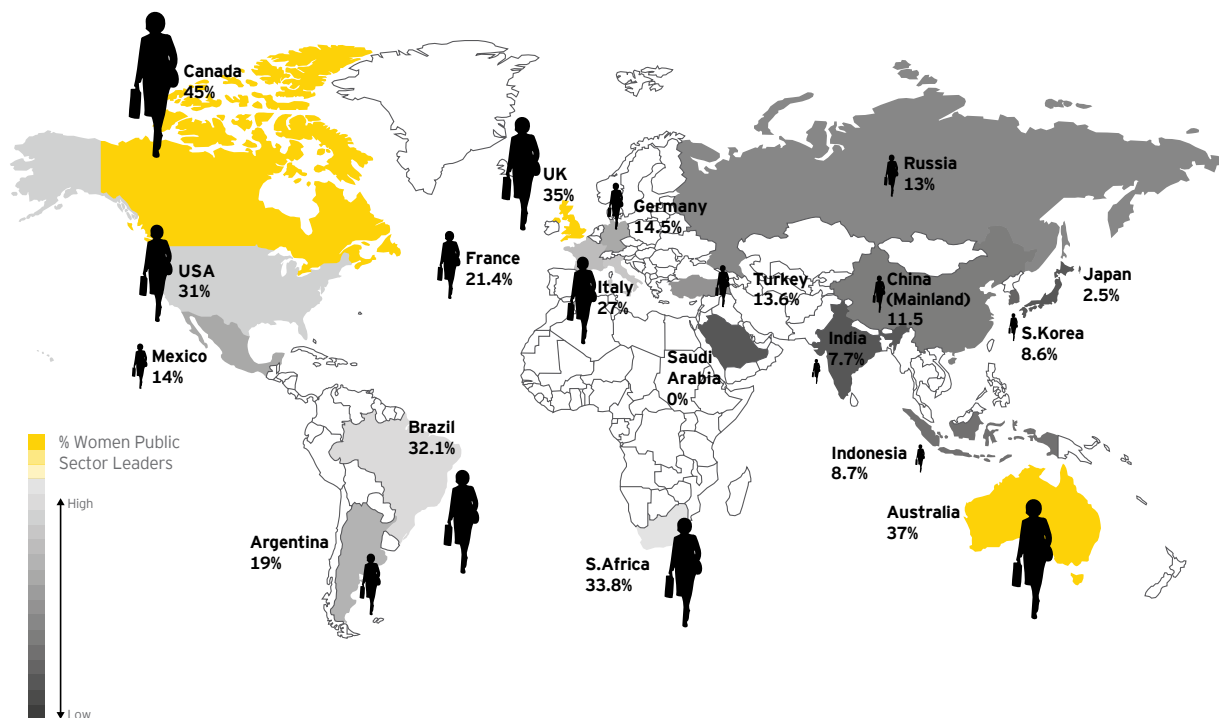
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Our survey results

Women make up 51% of the population. But even in the country ranked number one in our Index, Canada, they account for only 45% of its public sector leaders. In Japan, the world's third-largest economy, women account for 2.5% of public sector leaders. In India, the world's largest democracy, only 7.7% of public sector leaders are female. In Saudi Arabia, the figure is zero.

The data we have collected here tells only part of a story. The figures are from a range of different sources, in different countries, with different public sector structures: making direct comparisons is often difficult. However, they paint a broad picture that certainly deserves examination and interpretation.



When it comes to the numbers of female public sector leaders Canada, Australia and the UK take the top three places. The US, Italy, France and Germany perform favorably. South Africa and Brazil also do well. In fact, South Africa, which is ranked number four in our Index, tops the indices for both female ministers and women in parliament. It also performs highly in the private sector index.

South African leaders have worked hard to promote women's rights in what has historically been a patriarchal, traditional society. A number of relevant laws have been brought in over the past 16 years, including legislation banning all gender discrimination and laws providing women of any skin color the same degree of affirmative action in education, employment and politics as blacks, people of mixed race and Indians.

Employment equity, in place for a decade, requires companies with more than 50 people to hire and promote women. And although women lag behind men in management positions in both the private and public sectors, things are improving as shown by a series of high-profile successes by South African women in the past 12 months, including the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the appointment of the first female head of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

Much of this success can be attributed to South Africa's constitution, says Dr Mamphela Ramphele, a former vice-chancellor at the University of Cape Town and a one-time managing director at the World Bank. "Public service tends to reflect the way society is structured," she says. "The pride we have as South Africans that has a movement that has tackled this issue of gender equality head-on: it is a constitutional imperative, it is built into our policies, and it is built into our targets that the public and private sector have to meet."

Newly emerging economies

Brazil also scores highly, ranking in fifth place of the Index, with women seemingly sharing equally in country's rapid development. Since 2010 it has had a female president, Dilma Rousseff, and 10 of her 39 ministers are women, a record for Brazil. There are also women in high-profile private sector roles, including Maria das Graças Foster, CEO of Petrobras, GE Brazil CEO Adriana Machado and Standard & Poor's managing director Regina Nunes.

Luiza Bairros, Brazil's minister for policies in racial equality promotion, believes that progress has been made in her country but that the picture is complicated and issues of gender equality must be considered in a the context of a broader diversity agenda with racism at its core:

"Brazilian hierarchy puts white men at the very top, followed by white women, black men and then black women at the bottom. This shows an overlap of the presence of racism, rather than a gender issue per se. Gender issues do exist, but for a black woman the racial dimension will always represent more than gender. The racial issue makes gender discrimination much more complex for black women and, therefore, much harder to be overcome."

Newly emerging economies – Argentina, Mexico and Turkey – form a second tier in our Index. For example, Argentina has a quota requiring one-third of parliament to be women. This quota has already been exceeded, so perhaps there is something to learn from South America. Turkey, too, is making important strides forward. "Over the last decade Turkey owes its steady growth and development, in other words, its success in economic,

social, political and cultural fields, mostly to both public and private organizations,” says the country’s Family and Social Policy Minister, Fatma Sahin. “This success belongs to both, women and men. In the past we weren’t listening to each other, we didn’t have the ability to empathize or we weren’t aware of this ability. Now, though, I listen to my friends intently, and they listen to us.”

Russia, however, is performing less well. Although it has the highest number of women working in the public sector – 71% – only 13% of leadership roles are held by women. Women ministers, members of parliament and board members are thin on the ground. Ernst & Young’s 2012 Russia attractiveness survey revealed that despite the global economic uncertainty, the country’s attractiveness as an investment destination has grown by eight percentage points over 2011, the largest increase of any region. However, the report also found that concerns remain about Russia’s operating environment, in particular the country’s political, legislative and administrative environment. Greater representation of women at senior levels in public administration would surely be one way of allaying some of these fears.

And although rapid-growth markets in Asia represent the fastest-growing economic region in the world, with annual growth forecast at more than 6% a year, its countries are performing less well across our Index indicators. Economies in the region, including China and South Korea, have become export powerhouses and home to some of the world’s largest companies,

but this doesn’t mean that its governments and businesses should neglect the issue of diversity. Effective communication and an appreciation for diversity are increasingly important as organizations become more global. As more Asian companies become international players in their own right, their expansion into new markets must be underpinned by a single company mission that connects all levels and regions.

The best performers

When it comes to the best performing countries, Canada, Australia and South Africa all have some form of gender equality legislation in place. This may explain why their results are more consistent across all the indicators. In the UK, the percentage of female public sector leaders is higher than the percentage of female ministers, for example.

Lord O’Donnell, a former UK head of the Civil Service and Cabinet Secretary, says the results from the UK public sector are “good, but we could and should do better.” Although almost a third of leaders in the UK public sector are female, its numbers of female ministers and women in parliament are lower than in Canada, Australia, South Africa, Argentina, Germany, Mexico, France and the US. “All political parties are on record as saying they want to increase the proportion of women in parliament. But it’s just not happening,” he says.

Context for the G20 Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders

Figure 1. Women leaders vs. overall public sector representation

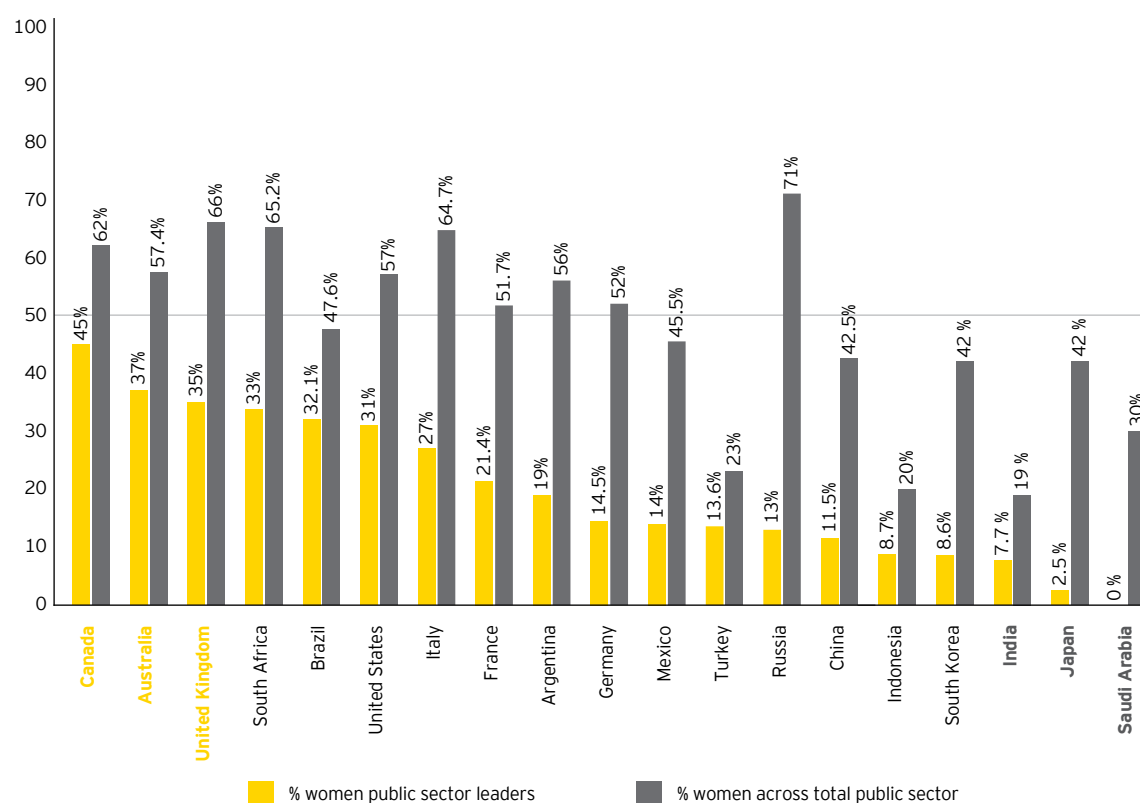
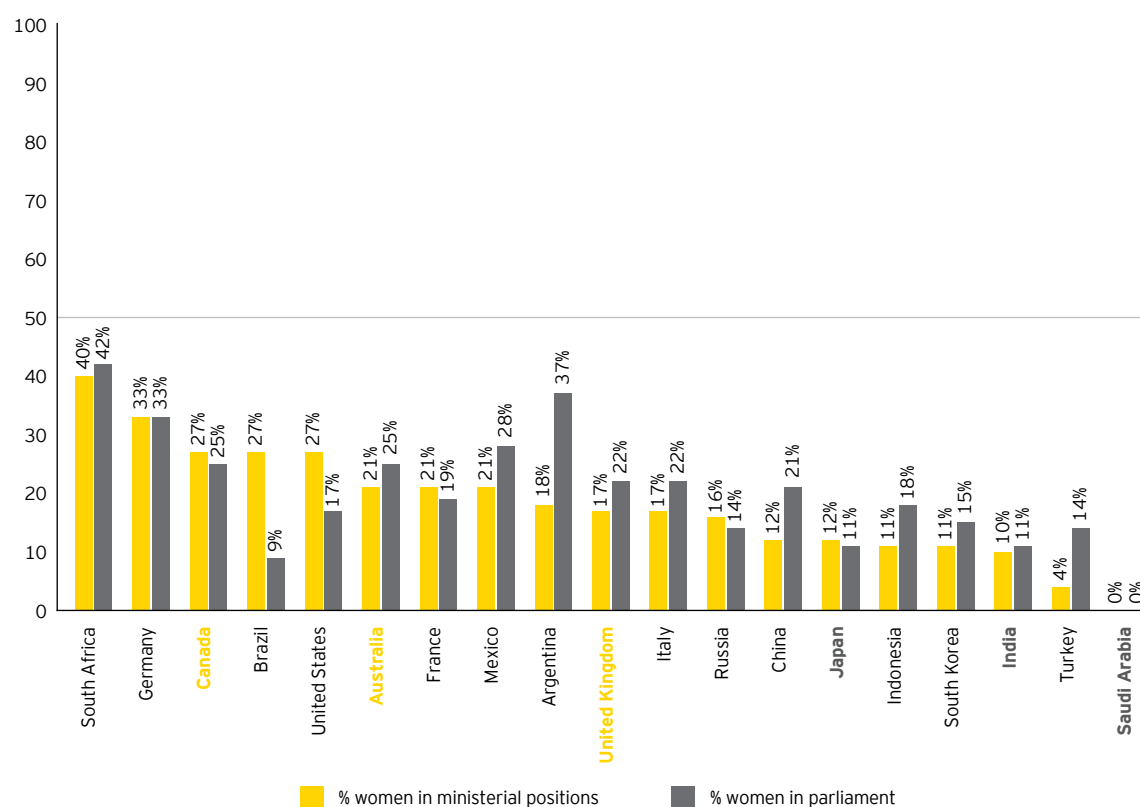


Figure 2. Women in parliament vs. women in ministerial positions



**Figure 3. % of women in parliament
(lower houses or equivalent)**

1st	South Africa	42
2nd	Argentina	37
3rd	Germany	33
4th	Mexico	28
5th	Canada	25
=	Australia	25
7th	United Kingdom	22
=	Italy	22
9th	China	21
10th	France	19
11th	Indonesia	18
12th	United States	17
13th	South Korea	15
14th	Turkey	14
=	Russia	14
16th	India	11
=	Japan	11
18th	Brazil	9
19th	Saudi Arabia	0

Figure 4. % of women in ministerial positions

1st	South Africa	40
2nd	Germany	33
3rd	Canada	27
=	Brazil	27
=	United States	27
6th	Australia	21
=	France	21
=	Mexico	21
9th	Argentina	18
10th	United Kingdom	17
=	Italy	17
12th	Russia	16
13th	China	12
=	Japan	12
15th	Indonesia	11
=	South Korea	11
17th	India	10
18th	Turkey	4
19th	Saudi Arabia	0

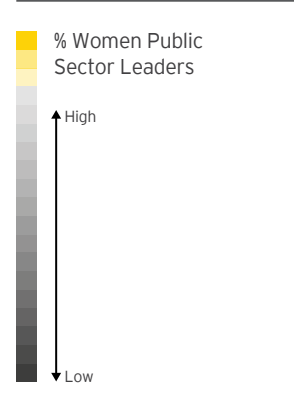


Figure 5. Total % of women across the public sector

1st	Russia	71
2nd	United Kingdom	66.0
3rd	South Africa	65.2
4th	Italy	64.7
5th	Canada	62
6th	Australia	57.4
7th	United States	57.0
8th	Argentina	56.0
9th	Germany	52.0
10th	France	51.7
11th	Brazil	47.6
12th	China	42.5
13th	Mexico	45.5
14th	Japan	42.0
=	South Korea	42.0
16th	Saudi Arabia	30.0
17th	Turkey	23.0
18th	Indonesia	20.0
19th	India	19.0

Figure 6. % of women on private sector boards

1st	France	22
2nd	United Kingdom	16
=	South Africa	16
=	United States	16
=	Germany	16
6th	Australia	11
=	Turkey	11
8th	Canada	10
9th	Russia	8
10th	Brazil	7
=	Mexico	7
12th	Italy	6
=	Argentina	6
=	China	6
15th	Indonesia	5
=	India	5
17th	South Korea	2
18th	Japan	1
19th	Saudi Arabia	0

3.





Legislation and policy

For the past 40 years, governments across the world have implemented measures to address gender inequality in the workplace and have introduced equal opportunity legislation and created protections against discrimination. For their own public sector workforce, many governments have gone further, leading by example, and have introduced policies and guidelines for meritorious employment, quotas and targets, and often attractive maternity, paternity and child care provision.

All of this has resulted in a relatively high percentage of women pursuing careers in the public sector compared to the private sector. In half the G20 countries, women constitute more the half the public sector workforce. Nonetheless, our research clearly demonstrates that despite a decreasing pool of men in the overall public sector workforce, the people leading the public sector continue to be largely men. Women are disproportionately represented at lower-level, lower-paying and often part-time employment.

Figure 7. 2012 G20 Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders



1st	Canada	45.0
2nd	Australia	37.0
3rd	United Kingdom	35.0
4th	South Africa	33.8
5th	Brazil	32.1
6th	United States	31.0
7th	Italy	27.0
8th	France	21.4
9th	Argentina	19.0
10th	Germany	14.5
11th	Mexico	14.0
12th	Turkey	13.6
13th	Russia	13.0
14th	China	11.5
15th	Indonesia	8.7
16th	South Korea	8.6
17th	India	7.7
18th	Japan	2.5
19th	Saudi Arabia	0.0

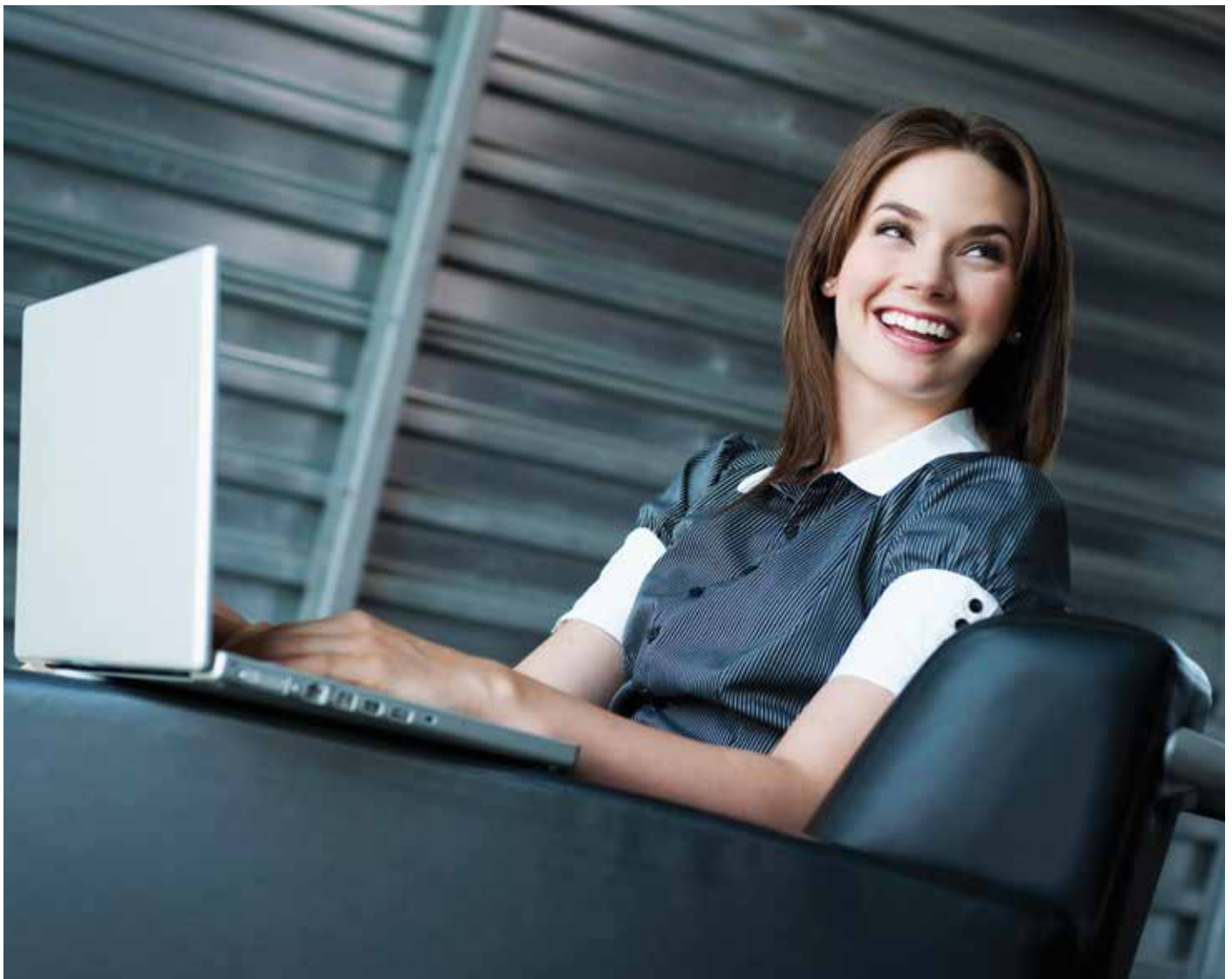
Figure 8. Total % of women across the public sector

1st	Russia	71
2nd	United Kingdom	66.0
3rd	South Africa	65.2
4th	Italy	64.7
5th	Canada	62
6th	Australia	57.4
7th	United States	57.0
8th	Argentina	56.0
9th	Germany	52.0
10th	France	51.7
11th	Brazil	47.6
12th	China	42.5
13th	Mexico	45.5
14th	Japan	42.0
=	South Korea	42.0
16th	Saudi Arabia	30.0
17th	Turkey	23.0
18th	Indonesia	20.0
19th	India	19.0

It is clear that legislation makes a difference, but it does not offer all the answers. New laws and progressive policies have succeeded in getting more women into the workforce, but looking beyond the statute book, it is clear that legislation has not enabled more women to take up leadership positions.

Certainly, Naledi Pandor, South Africa's Minister of Home Affairs, has little doubt that legislation is not a fix-all solution. Her country has adopted wide-ranging laws to address gender equalities – and made much progress – but problems still remain. "What's the point, for example, of having better-educated women if we find our aspirations blocked and our talents shortchanged in the world of work?" she asks. "If there is no space to express your ideas, or as happened to me once, if you're called "girlie" in a meeting, then it is very difficult to express a mature thought or to be taken seriously. We still have to address these aspects."

She believes that workplaces continue to be structured for and around men. "I'll never forget my experience at the University of Cape Town," she recalls. "After some months it became clear that our male colleagues were spending more time together but I couldn't work out where, until one day I had to attend a meeting at the Sports Hall and I discovered there was a bar and that was where they were spending their time, networking very effectively together, while we had to dash home to collect our children from after care and so on. This sort of thing has been going on for decades."





Labor force participation

The World Bank believes that “gender equality is smart economics,” and there is no doubt that women are central to broad-based economic and social development. This is because educating and investing in women and girls has a positive effect on productivity, efficiency and economic growth. Conversely, not focusing on women can limit poverty reduction and economic development. In today’s hyper-connected and competitive world, it is crucial for countries to take full advantage of this previously neglected talent resource.

Over the next decade, the impact of women on the global economy – as producers, entrepreneurs, employees and consumers – will be at least as significant as that of China’s and India’s respective one-billion-plus populations, if not more so. This notion grew out of Booz & Company’s analysis of International Labor Organization data on women in the global workforce. The report determined that approximately 860 million women worldwide are “not prepared” (lacking sufficient secondary education) and/or “not enabled” (lacking support from families and communities) to take part in the world economy. Most of these women are between the ages of 20 and 65, and nearly 95% live in emerging economies; the rest live in North America, Western Europe and Japan. Counting female births and those under age 20, this number will add up to a billion in the next decade.

This group is a hugely important resource for driving global economic growth. There will be a multiplier effect, which happens when large population segments integrate into the global economy, as in the case of China and India. As newly enabled consumers and workers enter the economy, they create new markets and increase the available talent pool.

Examples from the Middle East and Germany

But while significant progress has been made toward gender equality in many ways, much more remains to be done to open the playing field for women’s equal participation in business, society and the economy. Dr. Nemat Shafik, the deputy director of the IMF and a former senior civil servant in the UK, points to a macro dimension across the Index. “These results are partly a product of female labor force participation, which is very, very low in the Middle East, for example. So the question is, how do we get more women in the labor force?”

Muna AbuSulayman, an influential Arab leader across many fields, has no doubt that empowering women to become first-class, rather than second-class, citizens of society will represent a major step forward. “We live in a hyper-connected and hyper-complex world with different information coming at us from everywhere,” she says. “There are differences in society between what the base wants and what the top wants, and a lot of complications and difficulties occur because of this split. This means there is a challenge to raise awareness; changing society to share a common vision of what women empowerment means.”

When it comes to helping more women into prominence in the Middle East and North Africa, AbuSulayman believes that identifying what a “good life” means for different in the societies is the foundation for sustainable change. “Oil-producing and non-oil-producing countries have different problems and huge variants,” she points out. “For example, 63% of women are in

education in Qatar but only 10% in Yemen. Once we know what each society means when it wants a “good life” then this vision can inform policies and government decisions, and it can have support from the base.”

Labor force participation could also explain Germany’s strange results. Only 14.5% of its women are public sector leaders – and within the top two tiers of leadership this is even lower, at 13%. However, a third of women in parliament and in ministerial positions are women. This, Dr. Shafik suggests, could be down to the decline in German female labor force participation over the years. However, as women in Germany make up 52% of the public sector workforce, this suggests that women at the more unskilled end of the workforce remain employed, while more senior, qualified women leave.

Germany is clearly a problematic country for women in this sense. Unemployment is high, and an a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development earlier this year found that German women in the public sector earn 23% less than their male colleagues. In the private sector the figure is 21%. Germany does not have employment quotas, and its lack of child care could also affect female leadership patterns – only 18% of German children under the age of two have access to day care. This means German women tend to leave the workforce midway through their careers. A similar situation exists in Japan, ranked 18 in our Index, where 70% of women leave the workforce after their first child.

A number of deeply entrenched, persistent challenges are evident for the countries in our Index, and there can be no quick fixes. “I suspect that [austerity] will have a negative impact,” says Dr. Shafik. “A lot of countries will cut back on the training and mentoring programs,” although she points out that austerity is not a worldwide phenomenon. “Brazil, Turkey and Russia are booming in comparison, for example.”

The impact of austerity

Cuts in public sector jobs will result in worsening of labor market situation. In the UK, it is estimated that 710,000 public sector jobs will be lost by 2017, with twice as many women as men losing their jobs. In some countries such as Spain, Portugal and Greece, the cutbacks have focused on the most female-dominated sectors, such as education, health and social work, making the situation even worse for women. In Italy, 19,700 women’s jobs have been cut, and 87,000 more are expected in coming years in the education sector.

Cuts in the UK are hitting women hardest. Since the coalition government came to power in 2010, 270,000 public sector workers have lost their jobs. They are disproportionately women, and female unemployment is at a 25-year high. “That’s one of the things that worries me about austerity – women are more likely to exit the labor market. That’s a huge loss of talent,” says Dr. Shafik. Women accounted for 76% of the drop in the number of employees in councils in South East England, and they accounted for 100% of those losing their jobs in 19 councils in England and Wales.

A similar picture exists in the US. Analysis from the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) shows that the public sector was the only major sector that lost jobs January 2012–January 2013 – and that’s before the impact of the sequester can be taken into account. NWLC drew on data from the Current Employment Statistics Survey to show that the sector overall lost 74,000 jobs in the last year and that 63,000, an enormous 85%, were women’s jobs. NWLC further points out that as women make up about 57% of public sector employees, the cuts in 2012 represent “strikingly disproportionate losses for women.”

It carried on the trend from the recovery overall. Since June 2009, the public sector has shed 721,000 jobs, 63 percent of which were women's jobs. These continued losses have dramatically slowed the recovery for women – since the recovery began, women's public sector job losses wiped out 25 percent of their private sector job gains.

Cultural factors play a huge part in gender inequality, as we can see from the countries performing lowest on the index – India, Saudi Arabia and Japan. And across the entire world, hundreds of thousands of years of gender inequality have taken their toll. In the UK, for example, women tend to undervalue their own skills. Lord O'Donnell notes that "if a job states that there are five different skills needed, and a woman has three, she'll emphasize the two missing skills. There's a difference in confidence."

This observation is supported by Naledi Pandor. "Women don't give themselves credit for being clever; they tend to be less self-confident, they allow their male colleagues to speak out and volunteer for promotion and better assignments, and women will feel it is inappropriate to make similar demands. We don't negotiate for ourselves like men do, we negotiate for others instead. We don't do it for ourselves."

It is clear that women continue to face formidable legal, social, financial and cultural barriers that prevent their full participation in labor forces around the world. Importantly, even if women do make up a high proportion of their country's labor force – as in Russia, for example – it does not necessarily lead to more women in leadership roles. Governments and businesses need to do more to work together to remove these restrictions as both stand to benefit from a vital resource that can help spur growth and innovation.





Conclusions and actions

Ernst & Young's Index on Women as Public Sector Leaders gives a much-needed snapshot of how governments across the G20 countries have responded to efforts to diversify and enable more women to enter their senior ranks. As pointed out above, progress has been made in recent years – which has led to much greater representation of women at all levels of society – but we are not there yet.

So what can be done? We have identified four streams of action which, when taken together, seem to lead to greater representation of women in leadership roles. These are:

- ▶ Legislation to address visible barriers
- ▶ Cultural transformation to address invisible barriers
- ▶ Role models and leadership
- ▶ Actions for future women public sector leaders

Legislation to address visible barriers

Findings from Carleton University, Canada, suggest that legislation and political reform can reverse women's under-representation. They found that countries with "first past the post" electoral systems, without quotas, will not reach a level of 40% legislative participation by women until near the end of the 21st century. But in the 26 countries they studied that met or surpassed a target of 30%, 21 have some form of proportional representation, and 13 of the 26 either use quotas or have reserved seats for women. Dr. Shafik, for example, believes in targets. "When I worked at the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK, they did tilt the playing field, and quickly got a number of women in senior positions."

Legislation is also important to deal with equal employment opportunity, address open discrimination, safeguard maternity leave and ensure other protections of women in the workforce. Importantly, legislation and policy can assist in making better meritocratic recruitment decisions. However, experience also shows that legislation alone is not enough, as other, less visible factors impact on women's progression into senior leadership roles.

Cultural transformation to address invisible barriers

Evidence continues to mount for the power and pervasive nature of unconscious bias, in both men and women. In a 2012 Yale University study,¹ researchers asked 127 scientists at six universities to review identical applications for a lab manager position – with the resumes randomly assigned male or female names. The researchers found that staff consistently judged male candidates to be more competent and deserving of an extra US\$4,000 pay on average. They were also more willing to provide male applicants with mentoring and were more likely to hire them. Notably, women in the study were just as likely as men to make these judgments – even scientists, those guardians of objectivity, responded no better than control groups.

The best policies alone will not address these issues – change will only come if interviewers and decision makers become aware of their unconscious bias. Christine Nixon, the former police commissioner for the state of Victoria in Australia, has little doubt that such bias exists. Nixon, who was the first woman to become a police commissioner in Australia, agrees that while legislation sets the right conditions, it doesn't remove all the barriers along the way, some of which are more visible than others.

"I've been talking about the 'visible' barriers like height restrictions (in the police force) but there were many, many other barriers like attitudes and the composition of interview recruitment panels," she says. "The law helps but it does need a strong force within to drive it from the inside. And when you look at the bigger picture around women in the public service it is not necessarily unconscious bias. I think they know. It does require a constant knowledge and vigilance over the systems, processes and organizational mindsets, as well as the other side, which is about the women themselves. What we had to do with policing is convince women they could actually do it, have the job, and be confident to do it well. This was easier when I was chief commissioner as they see other women in senior positions."

¹ "Research intelligence – Gender bias hides, even in open minds," *The Times Higher Education*, 8 November 2012

Leaders, therefore, need to send a consistent message in support of achieving greater equality at senior levels. Part of the solution is to embed accountability into the performance targets of every leader, but it is also crucial to lead by example and address inappropriate behaviors and attitudes that undermine the goal of gender equity. Importantly, they need to be open about the fact that unconscious bias impacts recruitment, promotion and other decision making – they need to discuss it, understand its impact, measure it and put in place systems and processes to minimize it. In this context there is a need to continuously improve public sector recruitment practices and departmental cultures, entrenching respect for diversity.

Role models and leadership

There is no doubt that role models are important.

Janice Charette, Canada's Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Skills, notes that women leaders are a "huge asset" to Canada's public sector. "One of the wonderful effects of this progress is that younger public servants now have positive role models – male and female – that can inspire them in developing their own leadership styles and encourage them to aspire to ... senior roles," she says.

Dr. Shafik, too, firmly believes that everyone benefits from the presence of women at the top table. "I believe that everyone's better off in a balanced gender environment," she says. "The women are more comfortable and the men tend to behave better. And for junior women, it's so important to see senior women, and to have them as role models."

Such leaders can have a revolutionary effect, says South Africa's Naledi Pandor. "I think we need leaders who are transformative in character, leaders who inspire those they work with," she says. "Mentorship is sometimes absolutely necessary. One of the concerns one sometimes has is that women of my age were perhaps fortunate to be part of the struggle for equality and the struggle for political and socioeconomic rights. But sometimes we operate as though our children understand this struggle. We must never forget to teach the lesson that having opened the door, we must keep our foot there for it to remain open. Once it closes, then we go back rather than forward – so we have an important mentorship role to play."

Christine Nixon also agrees that leaders of government departments have a role in identifying and supporting female talent and building the next generation of female leaders, a point echoed by Christine Nixon. "I was with Victoria Police for nearly nine years and I had senior people in the organization who were committed to continuing my work after I had moved on," she says. "And certainly, by the time I left the force, more women were staying on for longer – encouraged by the fact we had sorted out things like maternity leave. There is a natural time it takes before you get to a position in policing when you can then be eligible for taking on a more senior role. You really need a minimum of 20 years to be eligible to be considered for more senior roles in a reasonably sized police force."

Importantly, attention needs to be paid to how policies and legislation get implemented in practice. For example, promotional policies might be well written and well intended, but the following questions should be asked to determine a department's practice:

- ▶ Does everyone have the opportunity to progress, even if they work part-time?
- ▶ Is progress against gender and other diversity targets measured in a meaningful way, or is it merely a routine compliance exercise, without efforts being actively refocused when progress has stalled?

Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic Leader of the US House of Representatives, has served her district in San Francisco for more than 25 years and shows no sign of slowing down. "If we want our economy to flourish and grow, we must lift up women in our economy," Pelosi said, when announcing that she would continue as leader of the Democratic caucus in November 2012. "Women in the academic world, women in health care. Any subject you can name is more wholesome, more successful, more efficient with the involvement of women."

Unfortunately, not all employers take a long-term view of a woman employee's potential contribution and can get focused on the more short-term impact of maternity leave, for example. South Africa's Naledi Pandor agrees that this can be a serious problem. "Families make a difference," she says. "Having a family has a huge impact on careers. Just as you're progressing, you take time out, and when you come back it's as though you're a different

person. Of course, university-educated women are tending to have fewer children and to have them a little later than our parents did, but families do come along just when competition at work begins to get serious, and our workplaces are not geared towards that little fact of humanity.”

This example underlines why it is important that decision makers support the re-entry of employees after maternity leave to better retain high-quality employees for the longer term. Recent research from the World Economic Forum illustrates this point more fully. The organization's 2012 Global Gender Gap Index assessed four key areas – health, access to education, economic participation and political engagement. The top four countries – Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden – all offer mandatory paternity leave, relatively generous parental leave benefits, tax incentives and post-maternity re-entry programs to try to help women return to work after childbirth.

Key questions therefore have to be asked of any organization:

- ▶ Are there real discussions about the individual needs of returning parents?
- ▶ Is the department actively managing the relationship when a woman is on maternity leave?
- ▶ And importantly is re-integration managed effectively and deliberately?

Actions for future women public sector leaders

Ernst & Young teams have spoken to many women in the public sector and other leadership roles over recent months. We asked them for their advice to individual women and what they should do to counter some of the barriers they experience on their way into senior leadership roles.

Most women public sector leaders felt that for themselves and their peers it is important to consider their legacy to the workplace and take on a stewardship role on behalf of other women. They are thinking about how to make their departments better for future generations and how to be a role model to aspiring women.

They also had advice for the generations coming after them. As a result of our conversations we compiled the following list. While it is not complete or objective, the following suggestions represents the combined wisdom of public sector leaders from many countries and gives guidance to aspiring women leaders around the world.

- ▶ Have a go – put your hand up. Assume you can do it. Let others know that you are ambitious.
- ▶ Be assertive – understand the options available to you and never be afraid to speak up for yourself.
- ▶ Learn to negotiate effectively – your manager is not a mind reader. They will not offer you the right role and coach you into leadership positions unless you can articulate what it is that you want.
- ▶ Tell your employer what you want – be really clear about the type of role that will work for you at this point in your life and the role you aspire to in the future.
- ▶ Play the long game – accept it's OK if your career takes a back seat while you start a family. Your career is often 30 years long. In the grand scheme of things, what happens for a sixth of that time is not that important.
- ▶ Respect that flexibility goes both ways – be flexible where and when you can to support your team and your organization.
- ▶ Agitate for change – as women leaders, public sector employees and board members Gender equity is not only a social justice issue, it improves productivity, engagement and decision making.
- ▶ Ask for advice – it's OK not to have all the answers. Talk to people about their experiences. Whenever you meet someone new, ask yourself: What can I learn from this person?

Further reading

Ernst & Young has a clear perspective on how businesses and governments around the world can create new opportunities for women.



Women: the next emerging market

Over the next decade, women will wield enormous influence over politics, business and society. This report explores the many ways Ernst & Young is helping to economically empower women.



In their own words: Women in leadership

Find out more about the women leading by example – in their own words. We speak to some of Australia's successful and inspirational business women who have made a difference in their chosen fields and in their communities.

Scaling up: why women-owned businesses can recharge the global economy

Women entrepreneurs own or operate up to one-third of all private companies around the globe. Get a fresh look at the productive potential of women in this special report.



Women of Africa: a powerful untapped economic force for the continent

African women's under-representation must be addressed if Africa is to leverage fully its promise and potential.

High achievers: recognizing the power of women to spur business and economic growth

Focusing on the foundation that women have established in sports; the impact they are now making in all segments of business and society; and the work that remains to be done. It also examines the anticipated impact of women as the largest emerging market in the world.



Paradigm shift: building a new talent model to boost growth

Businesses are on the brink of a talent crisis. Only a major shift in thinking can help tackle the global talent shortfall.

The new global mindset: driving innovation through diversity

The new rules of leadership await codification. But sifting through available trends and studies, we find certain themes repeatedly emerging.



Citizen Today

Shifting demographics, urbanization and climate change are just a few of the long-term and systemic trends reshaping 21st-century government. Learn more in our quarterly magazine for policy-makers around the world.

Methodology

Research for the first G20 Index report was carried out throughout September and October 2012 by government research specialists Civil Service World Research, part of Dods. The Worldwide Index of Women as Public Leaders Report will form part of a series of regular reports designed to track progress and change in governments, promoting gender equality amongst the leadership of the public service across the globe.

Whereas we were unable to find any other study looking specifically at women in leadership positions across the public sector, there are figures presented in wider reports such as, for example, the World Economic Forum's "Global Gender Gap" reports. Consultation with the International Labor Organisation reveal the data used for "legislators, senior officials and managers" – based on ISCO (68) and ISCO (88) classifications – to be inconsistent for each country. These data sets often include managers from non-public sector organisations. Data updates are also not made consistently, and the time series vary significantly.

The Index is therefore based on data compiled from official reports and government sources: a list of sources used to compile the report is available at the end. Every effort has been made to ensure that the figures are as comparable as possible. As no information for 2011/12 has been published by some countries, we have used the most recent information available. The majority of the figures used are taken from data published within the last year, with the exceptions of Russia (the most relevant data published is from 2005), Indonesia (2008) and South Africa (2009). Availability of data for Russia and China was problematic, the latter presenting challenges in the definition of "public sector". We have, however, used the most relevant official data available for "high level experts and researchers

enjoying government subsidies". For Germany, 2012 data was only available for the top two tiers of the civil service, showing 13% of women in these groups. We have used more representative data from 2005 which is for the top five tiers at 14.5%. We have researched the structure of each government and make-up of its administrative bodies to be able to take variation into account and to ensure that comparable groups are used. For instance, the politically appointed officials within the US government have not been included as they do not fit our definition of public sector leaders: instead we have used the Senior Executive Service.

We have defined Public Leaders as being non-elected senior executives across federal or national governments. We have not included data for the European Union as a whole in the rankings. This is because its measurement is not directly comparable across the G20. The data concern the executive ranks of the core civil service in central government. Definitions of the civil service, as well as sectors covered at the central level of government, differ across countries and should be considered when making comparisons. The total public sector employment figures comprise the percentage of women among all persons who fulfil the requirements of delivering or managing public services.

It should be noted that data have been collected from a number of different sources in a number of different countries, and all have slightly different public sector structures. Making direct comparisons across datasets compiled in different ways across the G20 is challenging. Whereas the variation in government structures and definitions is diverse, we have in each instance selected the most comparable data available in compiling the Index rankings.





Glossary

Public sector leader:

Non-elected senior executives across federal or national governments.

Total public sector:

Non-elected officials working in state-owned enterprises and public institutions.

Ministerial positions:

Cabinet-level political appointees with specific political remits in state governments (lower houses only).

Parliament:

Elected members of state parliaments (lower houses only).

Private sector board membership:

Director-level appointees to Fortune 500 and equivalent listed organizations in each country



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Notes

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