

## Exercise on Economic Growth

A recent World Economic Forum (WEF) study highlighted that XX country in the world has managed to eliminate the gap between man and women's economic participation.

### **Middle East and North Africa**

Most Arab world countries not only continue to perform far below the global average, but have also do not show much improvement over the last year or have deteriorated. The exceptions are some of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

XXXXX had significant improvements on both economic participation and political empowerment sub indexes. Wage inequality for similar work decreased and the gap between women and men's estimated earned income also diminished. Furthermore, both women and men stood for election and voted for the first time in that country's history. Nine women entered Parliament gaining 22.5 percent of the seats.

In XXXXXX, a woman was elected to the Lower House of Parliament for the first time in that nation's history. These economies have invested large amounts of resources in increasing women's education levels over the last decade and will now need to better integrate these women into the economy to reap the benefits of this investment.

XXXXX minor improvements on economic participation are offset by drops in both its health and education scores.

XXXXX shows minor improvements on labor force participation rates of women and revised data for tertiary education enrolment present a more positive picture than that of 2006. However, XXXXXXX remains the lowest ranking country in the region on political empowerment.

Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Minister of Finance of Nigeria, affirmed the importance of education but noted that her country does not even have statistics on the gender gap. Gender equality is not based on economics, she said, but rather on access to finance and knowledge that could make women more productive. She suggested that political will and cultural attitudes must be improved to open up opportunities for women. Cultural issues are not limited to developing countries, she added, pointing out that in Scandinavian countries, women don't advance in careers in large corporations as men do. "We have to look at it globally: how do we change it, how do we educate the men to make the change on cultural issues, how do we get leaders to step out and be counted?"

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Abdullah Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, reflected that four and a half years ago women in Afghanistan were imprisoned inside their houses by the Taliban. The peace agreement included assurances of gender equality, because the vulnerability of women was clear, he explained. Today, out of 6 million students, 35% are girls. Millions of women voted in the elections, despite threats by the Taliban, and some have already taken leadership roles in government.