

## CHAPTER 1

# Why a New Index Is Needed

In April 2016, the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council adopted resolutions on “Sustaining Peace” that aimed to strengthen the UN system’s ability to prevent conflicts.<sup>5</sup> The Sustaining Peace Agenda complements the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes the need to build inclusive, just, and peaceful societies for all. The normative framework on Women, Peace and Security established by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 is critical to both. It recognizes that women’s rights are vital to achieving peace and justice, so that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality. It calls for women’s empowerment and inclusion in preventing and resolving conflict and building peace (box 1.1).<sup>6</sup>

Global indices are a way to assess national progress against these goals. Such indices are increasingly popular because they can distill an array of complex information into a single number. Recent research has shown how “scorecard diplomacy” can be a powerful agent for change.<sup>7</sup> Highly comparative and easy to understand numbers call out low performers and help to reinforce good performance.

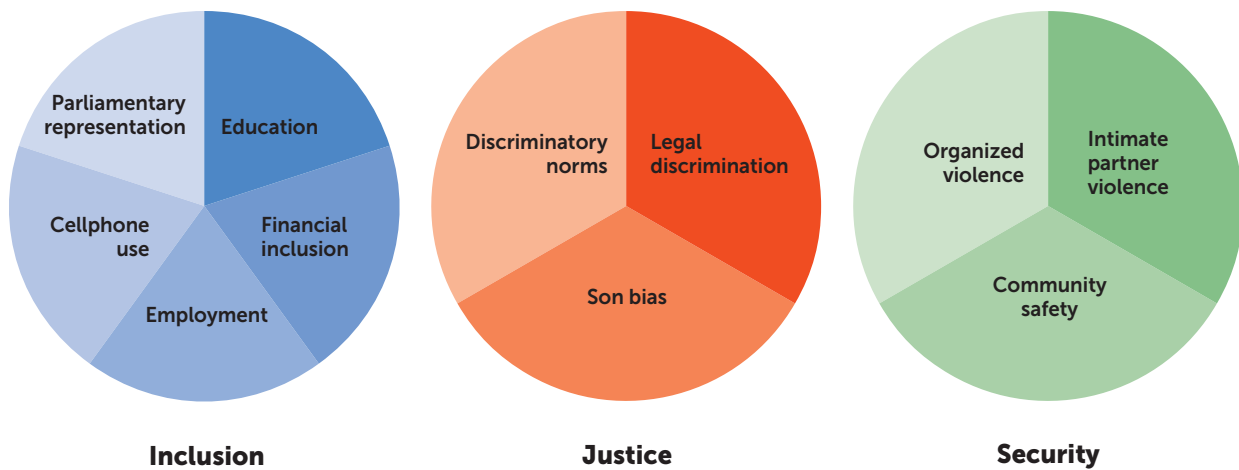
Yet, current gender indices tend to be restricted to such variables as education and political and economic participation. These are important aspects of women’s well-being and empowerment, but they are incomplete in the absence of measures of justice and security. Likewise, traditional measures of security include an array of indicators and assessments but ignore issues of justice, such as systematic bias

and discrimination, as well as violence against women and girls.

The new Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index introduced in this report is unique among indices on both the gender and the security fronts. The index bridges the insights from gender and development indices with those from peace and security indices, adopting key measures and insights of each (box 1.2). Simple and transparent, the index is based on best practice in the field. It was developed within the framework of the 2016 UN Sustaining Peace resolutions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development agreed by 193 governments and is firmly grounded in the goals, targets, and indicators associated with the 2030 agenda.

The index captures important aspects of women’s autonomy and empowerment as agents in the home, in the community, and in the economy and society. Thus, the WPS Index is structured around three basic dimensions of well-being: inclusion (economic, social, political); justice (formal laws and informal discrimination); and security (at the family, community, and societal levels; figure 1.1). The index and its 11 indicators, grouped into three dimensions, provide a standardized, quantitative, and transparent measure for ranking all countries with sufficient data and spotlighting key achievements and major deficits. In this first report, ranks and detailed results are presented for 153 countries, covering more than 98 percent of the world’s population. (See statistical table 1 for definitions, data sources, and detailed results.)

**FIGURE 1.1** The Women, Peace, and Security Index captures 3 dimensions of women’s well-being in 11 indicators



Source: Authors.

### BOX 1.1 The International and National Architecture around the Women, Peace and Security Policy: United Nations Security Council Resolutions and National Action Plans

The United Nations Security Council has adopted eight resolutions since 2000 that together make up the global Women, Peace and Security agenda. The first, Resolution 1325, has been described as “one of the crowning achievements of the global women’s movement and one of the most inspired decisions of the United Nations Security Council” (UN Women 2015a):

- United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 of 2000, the best known, was the first to address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. It stresses the importance of women’s participation in peace and security processes. This resolution is the basis for several subsequent resolutions.
- UNSCR 1820 and 1888, both adopted in 2009, recognize sexual violence as a weapon of war and call for greater efforts in response and prevention.
- UNSCR 1889, also adopted in 2009, focuses on women’s participation in peace processes, while UNSCR 1960 of 2010 reiterates the call to end sexual violence in conflict.
- In 2013, UNSCR 2106 sought to operationalize existing commitments, and UNSCR 2122 laid out specific methods for increasing women’s participation.
- Most recently, UNSCR 2242 (2015) links gender to countering violent extremism and counterterrorism

and calls for greater integration of women, peace, and security concerns across the Security Council agenda.

Pursuant to these commitments, many countries have drafted National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement the tenets of the UNSCRs at the country level. As of 2017, 66 governments have adopted such plans, and both the African Union and the European Union have drafted Regional Action Plans. The 2014 North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Policy on Women, Peace, and Security is another example of progress on the integration of principles of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions into global strategic policy dialogue (NATO 2016).

There is wide variety in the issues addressed in NAPs in terms of the level of accountability, the extent to which the plans are incorporated in broader national policy, and associated resource allocations. Our review of the Peace-Women online database indicates that to date 18 countries have revised and updated their commitments with second-generation NAPs.

Overall progress toward implementing these resolutions and commitments remains slow and uneven, however, as documented by UN Women’s recent global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (UN Women 2015a).

### BOX 1.2 The Women, Peace, and Security Index and other global gender indices

Major innovative features set the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index apart from existing gender indices and security indices. The WPS Index incorporates several indicators that have never been used in other prominent gender indices: whether women's paid work is deemed acceptable by men in the society, women's perceptions of safety in the community, and women's experience of organized violence. The index also incorporates other indicators that have rarely been included in indices: financial inclusion, cellphone use, a bias for sons, and intimate partner violence. (Statistical table 1 defines the 11 indicators.)

The WPS Index, which uses internationally comparable data from published sources, has the most in common with the Social Institutions and Gender Inequality (SIGI) Index, published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Economist Intelligence Unit's Women's Economic Opportunity Index. But those two indices rely extensively on expert judgment to measure various concepts or to address missing data, are far more complex in construction, and have many more indicators than the WPS Index. And the SIGI Index does not include economic dimensions (such as employment and cellphone use) or indicators of organized violence.

The number of indicators in other gender indices ranges from five (the Gender Inequality Index of the United Nations Development Programme) to 33 (SIGI Index) and averages around 16 indicators. Every index aims to weigh its dimensions equally; most use arithmetic means to aggregate across indicators and dimensions. And most gender indices focus on gender gaps, thereby restricting themselves to indicators that can be measured separately for men and women. The WPS Index—like the SIGI and the Women's Economic Opportunity Index—estimates women's status and achievements in an absolute sense rather than relative to men.

The indices around peace and security tend to focus either on state fragility or on forecasting the probability of armed conflict or political instability.

Among those focusing on state fragility, the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World (from the Brookings Institution), the Fragile States Index (Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy), the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy Fragility Index (Carleton University), and the State Fragility Index (George Mason University) all cover security, governance, and social and economic development. The Fragile States Index also considers refugees and internally displaced people, demographic pressures, elite fractionalization, level of militarization, and illicit trade in and availability of small arms and light weapons. Taking a slightly different slant on security, the Global Peace Index, published annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace, is based on 23 indicators grouped into dimensions of domestic and international violent conflict, level of safety and security in society, and militarization, but it has no indicators that are directly related to women or gender inequality.

Forecasting-type indices include the Conflict Instability Ledger (University of Maryland), the Political Instability Task Force (Central Intelligence Agency), and the Global Conflict Risk Index (Joint Research Centre of the European Commission). These indices use predictive models to calculate the statistical risk of armed conflict based on variables that range from infant mortality rates to trade openness.

The number of indicators in the peace and security indices ranges from 20 (Index of State Weakness in the Developing World) to over 70 (Country Indicators for Foreign Policy). Like the WPS Index, they often cover levels of education and conflict intensity but typically do not include a focus on women or disaggregate results by gender. An exception is the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy Fragility Index, which incorporates a large range of indicators, including scores on gender (like women in parliament and the workforce) and the environment.

Unlike the WPS Index, the peace and security indices generally use a mix of official data and expert judgment, with some relying heavily on expert judgment of country performance in specific domains.

#### How the Women, Peace, and Security Index adds value

The WPS Index adds value as a more complete measure of women's status in society than other indices in several key respects:

- It is the first gender index to be motivated, developed, and published in the framework of the SDGs and is firmly grounded in the internationally agreed goals, targets, and indicators of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- None of the existing global peace and security indices fully captures the gender dimensions of peace and security, nor do they include key aspects related to justice or to personal or organized violence.
- The WPS Index incorporates a major security dimension, which includes the lifetime incidence of intimate partner violence, women's perceptions of safety in their community, and organized violence in the country.

- The WPS Index uses absolute levels rather than gender gaps, making it possible to use such indicators as intimate partner violence and discriminatory norms and to avoid misleading results in contexts where low levels of achievement and inclusion characterize both men and women.

The WPS Index cannot be used to predict conflict, because organized violence is part of the measure. Moreover, well-known predictive indices of international security already exist (see box 1.2), and forecasting conflict is a major strand of peace and security studies.<sup>8</sup> The WPS Index does, however, provide useful insights to inform research about the risk of conflict given, for example, the association between intimate partner violence and conflict (discussed in chapter 3). The relationship between gender inequality and violent conflict has been explored in major studies, and box 1.3 highlights key themes and spotlights new findings relevant to the design of the WPS Index.

The index will be updated every two years. Progress will be tracked ahead of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019 and the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2020, providing a platform for scaling up efforts toward 2030.

### Why adopt a multidimensional approach?

It is universally acknowledged that well-being is multidimensional: that education is important, but so are economic opportunities and security at home and in the community. These multiple dimensions are interconnected, and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies. This insight is often associated with Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, and the concept has been popularized in the Human Development Reports and elaborated on by economists, philosophers, and development practitioners. We also know that high achievements in one dimension do not guarantee success in other spheres of life.

While efforts to quantify these dimensions inevitably simplify and lose some of the richness of the underlying concepts, the three dimensions of the WPS Index preserve much of the breadth and depth of the underlying principles. Composite indices such as the WPS Index have important strengths in capturing and synthesizing complex data in a way that can be readily understood and that is especially insightful for multidimensional concepts. By focusing on all countries on a regular basis, global indices can make information easy to process and can magnify the comparative element of status and reputation for individual countries.<sup>9</sup> A prominent early and still widely cited example is the Human Development Index. The WPS Index specifically aims to accelerate progress on the United Nations Women, Peace and Security agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), bringing partners together around an agenda for women's inclusion, justice, and security. It points toward a roadmap of needed reforms and can enhance the effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration on related fronts.

### Why these three dimensions?

The three dimensions chosen for the WPS Index were carefully selected. Inclusion is central both to the Women, Peace and Security agenda and to the SDGs; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of inclusion throughout, both for economic growth and more broadly.

Likewise, justice and security are at the core of women's well-being. Moreover, they underpin SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, making access to justice available for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels. These two dimensions of the WPS Index have special resonance and relevance to women and girls, who often face injustice through formal and informal discrimination and a lack of security at home, in the community, and in society at large.

The WPS Index approach fits well with the emerging agenda around SDG 16+, which highlights the links among the SDGs and emphasizes the integrated and cross-cutting nature of the peace and security agenda.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the index not only promotes the SDG themes of inclusion, peace, and justice, but it is also directly related to how empowered women act as agents in the home, the community, the economy, and political life. This is a key theme of SDG 5, which explicitly aims to eliminate gender inequality and discrimination in all its forms.

### Data and methods

Any index requires choices about indicators, data sources, and data aggregation. This section discusses indicators. Definitions and data sources are in statistical table 1. Appendix 1 outlines the normalization and aggregation procedures used in constructing the WPS Index, which have been informed by the policy and academic literature on composite indices.<sup>11</sup>

Choosing indicators requires dealing with data constraints, which can be severe when identifying global measures that are widely accepted and comparable across a large set of diverse countries. This is especially so in the sphere of women and security, where data are particularly scarce. Our extensive review of the data was informed by the academic literature and the most recent reports of the United Nations (including UN Women<sup>12</sup> and the UN Secretary-General<sup>13</sup>), the World Bank, Data2X, and others.

To keep the index as simple and transparent as possible and to limit the number of indicators, strict criteria were applied in their selection in a two-step process (figure 1.2). The final indicators and their associated rationale are outlined in table 1.1.

All the indicators selected are explicit aspects of the SDGs (figure 1.3). As far as possible, they are part of the official set of indicators and targets for monitoring the SDGs. For each indicator, data came from a single published source, except in the case of intimate partner violence. Because the information for that indicator from the main source, UN databases on intimate partner violence, was too limited in scope,

### BOX 1.3 Gender inequality and violent conflict: What we know and new results

A recent study usefully distinguishes two broad explanations that link gender inequality with violent conflict (Forsberg and Olsson 2016). The first relates to gender norms, specifically, that masculinized cultures can worsen the risk of violence. Highly patriarchal societies often assign traditional gender stereotypes to women and men, linking manhood to such characteristics as toughness and more bellicose attitudes. The second explanation emphasizes the capacity to mobilize for conflict, arguing that high gender inequality facilitates recruitment of young men, especially where there are excessive numbers of men due to a cultural bias favoring sons.

Several studies link gender unequal norms to violent conflict (Caprioli 2000, 2003, 2005; Caprioli and Boyer 2001; Gizelis 2009, 2011; Hudson et al. 2008/09; Melander 2005). Caprioli (2005) argues that institutionalized norms of gender inequality can inflame conflict by legitimizing the use of force. A related argument is that a highly patriarchal society normalizes violence in general, and against women specifically, increasing the risk of societal level conflict (Hudson et al. 2008/09).

In a series of articles, Caprioli quantifies factors relating to female social, economic, and political inclusion that are statistically significant in explaining variations in inter- and intrastate conflict, including high fertility (interpreted as a direct measure of gender inequality and a proxy measure for education, employment, and social standing), the share of women in the labor force, and the share of women in parliament (Caprioli 2000, 2003, 2005; Caprioli and Boyer 2001). Her results, which have been widely cited, underline the important point that the relationship between gender inequality and violent conflict cannot be limited to one factor; the social, political, and economic dimensions of gender inequality are all relevant.

High levels of gender inequality manifested in son bias have been linked to higher levels of military recruitment and mobilization. Hudson and den Boer (2002, 2004) draw on data for India and China to link their unbalanced sex ratios and the likelihood of conflict. Urdal (2008) finds that youth population bulges in India over 1956–2002 are associated with higher levels of armed conflict, political violence, and Hindu-Muslim riots. Hudson et al. (2008/09) find that son bias can result in large surplus numbers of aggressive, dissatisfied men, which can reinforce a hypermasculine culture that promotes violence as an acceptable means of conflict resolution.

And if men are unable to find a spouse or a job, this may reduce the opportunity cost of gathering in groups or “gangs,” activities that can then spill over into violent conflict.

Historical support for the thesis that imbalanced sex ratios have a security dimension includes the example of the Qing dynasty government of China, which in the eighteenth century “responded to the rising sex ratios brought about by high levels of female infanticide by encouraging single men to colonize Taiwan” (Ebenstein and Sharygin 2009). A century later, high rates of female infanticide in Shandong province were associated with a local rebellion.

Another dimension of gender inequality is women’s physical insecurity. Hudson et al. (2008/09) create a five-point ordinal scale to capture the degree of physical threat women experience related to domestic violence, rape, and femicide, finding that this threat is a statistically significant correlate of societal violence.

We build on this body of work and add value in several ways. As background analysis to inform development of the Women, Peace, and Security Index, we run a series of regressions to explain levels of organized violence. First, we update the time period from 2001 (the last year in Caprioli’s [2005] most recent analysis) to the latest data available (which extends through 2016 in some cases). Second, we use an improved measure of violent conflict (organized violence) as an outcome variable. Third, our measure of exclusion takes advantage of the more comprehensive dataset on ethnic power relations that has been published since Caprioli’s (2000) seminal piece, the Ethnic Power Relations dataset, which records all politically relevant ethnic groups and their degree of access to executive-level state power (Wimmer et al. 2009). Fourth, we incorporate direct indicators of gender-based violence and discriminatory norms. As in Caprioli’s (2005) models, our regressions also control for polity type, transitional polities, gross domestic product per capita, number of excluded groups, and prior violence.<sup>1</sup>

Our results quantify novel insights into the significance of intimate partner violence and discriminatory norms in explaining levels of organized violence. These results are robust across a variety of models and specifications. The effect sizes on these variables are also larger than those associated with high rates of adolescent fertility, maternal mortality, and low parliamentary representation, which generally remain significant.

1. Data for polity type are from the Polity IV Project. The prior violence variable is a lagged version of the dependent variable, based on data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/Peace Research Institute Oslo.

those data were augmented with results published in national reports and peer-reviewed literature.

The index was estimated for 153 countries,<sup>14</sup> covering 98.2 percent of the world's population across all levels of income and development. That coverage compares favorably with the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum (144 countries) and the Gender Inequality Index of the United Nations Development Programme (140), for example. To be included in the WPS Index, a country must have data available for at least 8 of the 11 indicators. Of the 153 countries, 15 were missing data for 1 of the 11 indicators, 8 were missing data for 2 indicators, and 8 lacked data for 3 indicators. Missing data for a country were generally addressed by imputing the regional average for that score.<sup>15</sup> In a few cases, the estimate for the country's nearest neighbor that shared common characteristics, such as level of development, was imputed. All these cases are footnoted in statistical table 1.

One important aspect of the justice dimension for which adequate data are lacking at the country level is official identity. An estimated 1.5 billion people—mainly in Africa and Asia—cannot prove their identity, and more than a third of them are under age 18.<sup>16</sup> Important ramifications for the inclusion dimension follow, because without an official identity, a person can struggle to access financial services, social benefits, health care, and education and to secure political and legal rights. Collectively, the barriers facing individuals without a legal identity can lead to substantial exclusion and can be especially severe for people in conflict-affected countries and for people who are displaced from their homes.

Lack of identity affects more women than men, though the gender gap is not large: the best global estimates are 734 million men and boys (23 percent) and 742 million women and girls (22 percent).<sup>17</sup> The highest shares of unregistered women are in Sub-Saharan Africa (38 percent) and the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia (both 29 percent).

In low-income countries overall, more than one in three people are unregistered.

### Improving sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis

Holding governments and decision-makers accountable for their international commitments relies on timely and high-quality data that are disaggregated by sex, as well as other relevant characteristics. Such data are just as critical for informing effective decision-making. The data revolution called for by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must have women and girls at its heart. Likewise the Women, Peace and Security agenda calls for international actors and national governments to improve data on gender and conflict.<sup>18</sup>

A range of data gaps was encountered during development of the WPS Index, from economic opportunities (lack of comprehensive data on earnings, for example) through political participation at the local level. Current data on intimate partner violence are unavailable for many countries, so lifetime rates of partner violence were used. For 29 countries included in the index, the indicator value for intimate partner violence was imputed based on regional averages.<sup>19</sup> Comparable data on discriminatory norms are typically limited to groups of countries (for example, the mainly low-income countries covered by Demographic and Health Surveys); fortunately, however, the new Gallup and International Labour Organization data on male attitudes to women working recently became available.

The indicators that were selected to measure the security dimension are investigated in depth in chapter 3. It should be noted here, however, why some possible measures were not included. Constraints regarding measures of current violence against women are noted above. Women's participation in peace-making, for example, was not included because comprehensive and timely data are not available.<sup>20</sup>

## FIGURE 1.2 Six principles guided selection of the indicators for the Women, Peace, and Security Index

### STEP 1

#### Global relevance

Deeply relevant to women's well-being and applicable to a broad range of country settings and the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### Actionability

Actionable by policymakers and partners in advancing the women, peace, and security agenda.

#### Data availability

Data must be available for at least 8 of the 11 indicators that make up the index for at least 150 countries.

### STEP 2

#### Data quality

Represent widely agreed-on measures and are derived from official sources (such as national statistical offices, UN organizations) or other reputable international sources (such as Gallup, Peace Research Institute Oslo, peer-reviewed journals).

#### Transparency

Data are derived from a population, or a representative survey, based measure and do not rely on the judgment of experts to score performance (such measures can be criticized as subjective).

#### Statistical comparability, adequacy, and timeliness

Data are collected and processed in a statistically reliable way, are not subject to large or frequent revisions, and are available for at least 120 countries for a recent year.

**TABLE 1.1 Indicators for the Women, Peace, and Security Index: Definitions and rationale**

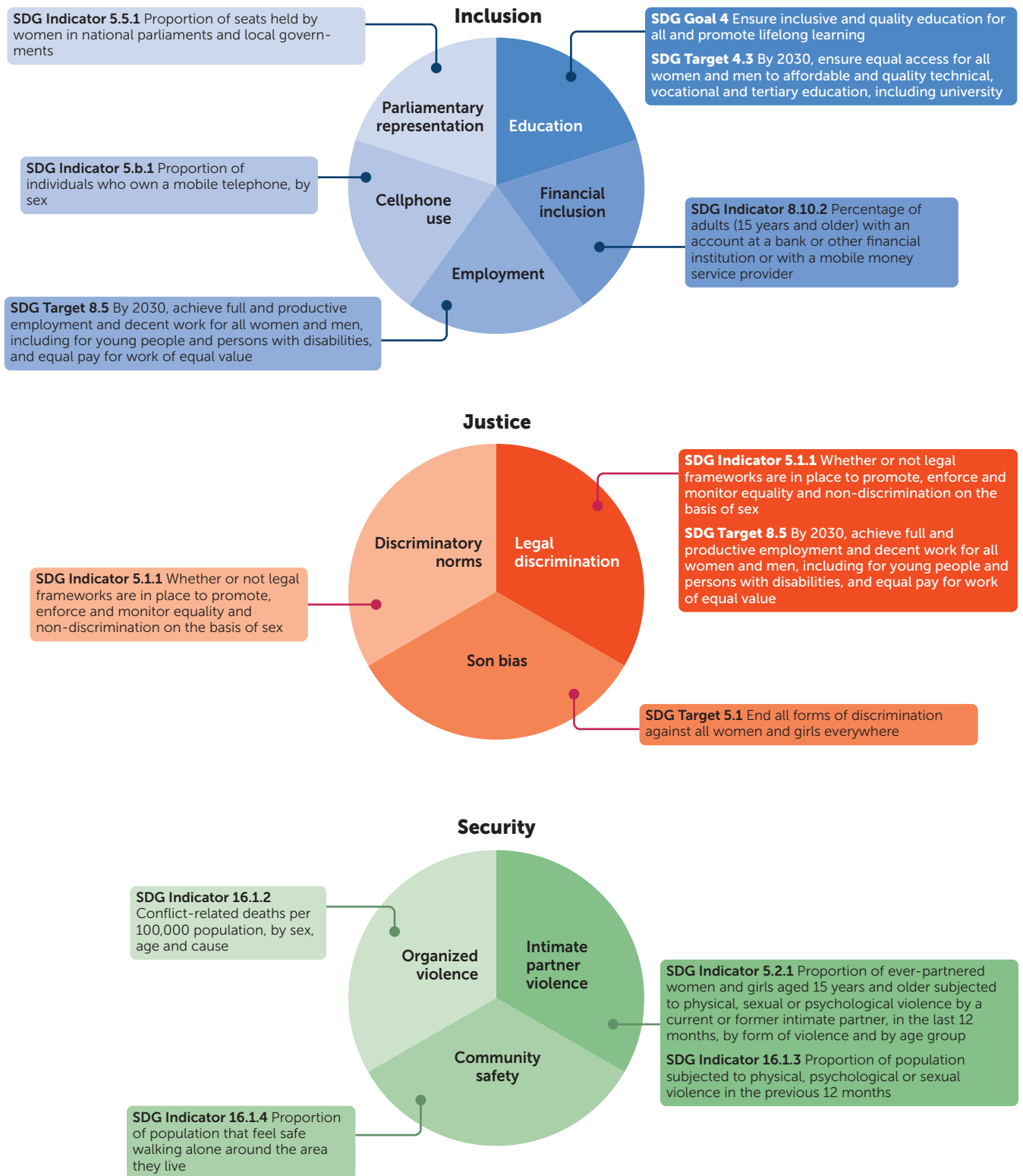
Dimension and indicator	Definition	Rationale
<b>Inclusion</b>		
Education	Average number of years of education of women ages 25 and older.	Education is critical to women's opportunities, freedom from violence, and health. Years of schooling is a more precise measure than, for example, secondary school completion.
Employment	Percentage of women ages 25 and older who are employed.	Reflects women's economic opportunities, which are central to realizing women's capabilities. It is preferred to labor force participation because it excludes unemployment.
Cellphone use	Percentage of women ages 15 years and older who report having a mobile phone that they use to make and receive personal calls.	Increasingly recognized as core to people's opportunities to participate in the economy, society, and politics.
Financial inclusion	Percentage of women ages 15 and older who report having an individual or joint account at a bank or other financial institution or who report using a mobile money service in the past year.	Allows individuals to smooth consumption, manage risk, be more resilient, invest in education and health, and start and expand a business.
Parliamentary representation	Percentage of seats held by women in lower and upper houses of national parliament.	This is the most widely available measure of women's political participation.
<b>Justice</b>		
Legal discrimination	Aggregate score for laws and regulations that limit women's ability to participate in society and the economy or that differentiate between men and women.	Discriminatory laws have adverse repercussions, making it harder for women to own property, open bank accounts, start a business, or take a job and enter professions restricted to men.
Son bias	Extent to which the sex ratio at birth (ratio of number of boys born to number of girls born) exceeds the natural demographic rate of 1.05. <sup>a</sup>	Preference for boys reflects serious discrimination against girls and women.
Discriminatory norms	Percentage of men ages 15 years and older who disagreed with the proposition: "It is perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants one."	Captures discrimination against women in economic opportunities and the world of paid work.
<b>Security</b>		
Intimate partner violence	Percentage of women who experienced over their lifetime physical or sexual violence committed by their intimate partner.	Almost one in three women globally has experienced violence at home, with the rate rising as high as 78 percent in one case.
Perception of community safety	Percentage of women ages 15 years and older who report that they "feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live."	Security and safety in the community affect women's mobility and opportunities outside the home.
Organized violence	Total number of battle deaths from state-based, non-state, and one-sided conflicts per 100,000.	Captures the extent of insecurity in society due to armed conflict.

a. Demographers estimate a natural sex ratio at birth to be 1.05 male births to 1 female birth. We estimate missing girls using the following formula: Missing girls =  $G = (X/F)M$ , where  $X$  is the number of boys born in excess of 1.05 times the number of girls born,  $F$  is total number of girls born, and  $M$  is total number of boys born.

b. Based on the Women, Business, and the Law database, a World Bank Group product that collects data on laws and regulations that constrain women's economic opportunities (World Bank 2016b). Our indicator aggregates 78 laws and regulations that differentiate between men and women across six categories (accessing institutions, using property, going to court, providing incentives to work, building credit, and getting a job), with greater weight given to six laws (requirement that married women obey their husband, mandate for paternity leave, equal remuneration for work of equal value, non-discrimination based on gender in hiring, and prohibitions of dismissal of pregnant workers and of child or early marriage). The "accessing institutions" category includes several types of constitutional provisions for gender equality.

Source: Authors. See statistical table 1 for data sources.

**FIGURE 1.3 The Women, Peace, and Security Index has explicit links to the Sustainable Development Goals, Targets, and Indicators**



Source: Authors, based on Sustainable Development Goals <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> (UN 2016b).



The battle deaths indicator used in the security dimension of the index is not disaggregated by sex, nor does it account for homicide rates in a society. Homicide data were not used as an indicator because they are generally incomplete and at times not comparable.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, up-to-date comprehensive data are lacking on sexual violence in conflict (see box 3.1 in chapter 3).

A broad range of actors increasingly recognize the critical importance of addressing the gender data agenda. In May 2016, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a major tangible contribution of US\$80 million over the next three years to help close gender data gaps. At the 2016 Women

Deliver Conference in Copenhagen, partners across governments, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations agreed on a new statement of principles regarding gender data and their importance for accelerating development outcomes. Another welcome example on action on gender data gaps is the efforts by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), the International Labour Organization, and the UN Statistics Division to improve the collection, tabulation, and dissemination of statistics on women's paid work, especially in informal employment, which is so extensive in developing countries.

## SPOTLIGHT 1 Country performance on the Women, Peace, and Security Index reveals uneven achievements, with some reversals

**Iran** presents an interesting case of uneven achievements across dimensions. There are good accomplishments on financial inclusion, with almost 9 in 10 women having access to financial accounts, compared with a South Asian regional average of less than 2 in 5, and a similar high share of women using cellphones. Iranian women average about eight years of schooling compared with a regional average of four years. On the other hand, Iran performs considerably worse on the Women, Peace, and Security Index relative to its per capita income rank, dropping a hefty 57 places.

In particular, legal discrimination is a significant barrier to gender equality in Iran and is among the factors pulling the index rank down to 116. According to the World Bank, there are 23 restrictions against married women in Iranian law, including in applying for a passport, traveling outside the home, choosing where to live, and being head of the household. Women cannot get a job or pursue a profession in the same way a man can; they cannot be ensured of equal pay for equal work, and there are no laws to restrain gender discrimination in hiring. There are no laws that penalize or prevent the dismissal of pregnant women from work, nor are there laws that provide rights for paternity or parental leave or tax deductible payments for childcare. The Iranian Civil Code confers power on a husband to prevent his wife from taking any job found to be incompatible with the family interest or the dignity of the husband or his wife. Women have no legal protection against domestic violence or sexual harassment by anyone, and the constitution has no non-discrimination clause with gender as a protected category.

**South Africa** ranks second in the WPS Index for Sub-Saharan Africa, while revealing major unevenness in performance. Overall levels of achievement in inclusion are high relative to the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, most notable in women's education and parliamentary representation. While there have been meaningful advances on the inclusion and justice fronts, the security of women lags—with especially low levels of perceptions of community safety. Fewer than 3 in 10 women feel safe walking in their community at night (the regional average is about 5 in 10). The national rate of intimate partner violence (25 percent) in the WPS Index is drawn from a 1998 regional survey of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Eastern Cape. Other regional studies have found even higher lifetime rates (GenderLinks for Equality and

Justice 2015). Implementation of the 1998 Domestic Violence Act has been limited, including the failure of police to record cases, provide victim-friendly rooms at police posts, and convey appropriate information to victims, all of which in turn reduce the chances of successful prosecution (Africa Check 2016).

One promising initiative to change gender norms in South Africa has been the Soul City Program, a multimedia health promotion and social change project. Beginning in 1994 and using drama and entertainment, Soul City has reached more than 80 percent of South Africa's population and helped draw attention to domestic violence and raise awareness of key social services (Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication 2016). The program also seeks to increase participation and community action and to empower women to negotiate relationships and safer sex.

**Sri Lanka** has long been recognized for its advances in gender equality and human development. Female literacy is close to universal. Free and mandatory education for boys and girls was established shortly after independence in 1948, and girls have seen equal access to education at all levels (UNICEF 2013). Universal franchise for both sexes was established in 1931, and Sri Lanka elected the world's first female head of state, Sirima Bandaranaike, in 1960. Major investments in women's health following independence led to falling maternal mortality, more girls staying in school, and families investing more in their daughters (Jayachandran and Lleras-Muney 2009).

Sri Lanka is tied with Botswana in 97th place overall on the WPS Index, which is at least 30 places ahead of Bangladesh and India, for example. Yet major gaps persist, and Sri Lanka's ranking on the index is 17 places below its income ranking. In 2016, the employment rate for working age women was less than half that of their male counterparts, and it has remained stagnant in recent decades. Women are also systematically underrepresented in management and decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, and their political representation in parliament is extremely low, at below 6 percent (Kovinthan 2016). While the WPS Index uses the United Nations Population Fund estimate of the lifetime rate of intimate partner violence of about 28 percent, higher rates have been reported by the Women's UN Report Network and PeaceWomen, for example (Nikolau 2016; PeaceWomen 2016).

*(continued)*

## **SPOTLIGHT 1 Country performance on the Women, Peace, and Security Index reveals uneven achievements, with some reversals** *(continued)*

**Turkey** is a country of gender-equality paradoxes. Women hold almost half the academic positions and are one-third of the country's engineers and lawyers, yet they are virtually absent from the highest levels of political power, with only one woman currently in the cabinet (Muftuler-Bac 2015). While 1 in 8 chief executive officers in Turkey are women (against around 1 in 14 in the United States), the female labor force participation rate is the lowest among comparable Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (Muftuler-Bac 2015).

This unevenness is captured in Turkey's performance on the WPS Index. Its overall ranking of 105 is 54 places below its income rank and partly reflects low female employment rates and a share of women in parliament standing at 15 percent. Legal discrimination and deep-seated norms appear to be major constraints. Violence against women is another major challenge in Turkey, with almost 40 percent of women experiencing physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime. President Erdogan has declared that men and women are not equal and that believing so goes against nature. A number of politicians reinforce the view that women's role in society is that of traditional homemaker and mother (Muftuler-Bac 2015).

**The United Arab Emirates (UAE)** stands out as the highest ranking country in the Middle East and North Africa region across a number of metrics related to women's achievements, alongside major constraints. The government's commitment to women's education and participation in public life helps propel the country to a rank far above its neighbors', at 42nd place overall on the WPS Index (tied with Ecuador). In education, the country performs well regionally and globally, averaging just about nine years of schooling for women. Female students outperform their male counterparts in test scores and graduation rates at the secondary and tertiary education levels, leading to worries that men are falling behind on this front (Ridge 2009). The UAE is close to the global average in women's representation in parliament, and women account for almost a third of the cabinet, almost double the global mean, although this is largely through the UAE's system of direct appointments rather than popular elections (Dajani 2016).

An estimated 47 percent of UAE women are in the labor force, the second-highest rate in the region after

Qatar, with the country's large public health and education sectors being the major employers (El-Swais 2016). Poor working conditions for domestic workers, however, affect many of the estimated 150,000 women migrants working in UAE, who are excluded from federal labor law protections (Human Rights Watch 2014). Women remain underrepresented in the formal private and corporate sectors. Although the UAE government mandated that companies include women on their boards in 2012, data for 2015 show that only 1 percent of board directors are women (Lee et al. 2015).

UAE's achievements are constrained by its retention of many discriminatory laws, resulting in a rank close to the bottom on the justice dimension of the WPS Index. While there are some legal protections for women, including constitutionally mandated equal pay for equal work, the Sharia-based Law of Personal Affairs, which covers marriage, divorce, and succession, is restrictive and discriminatory, with clauses that require a male guardian to approve a woman's marriage and that give men a unilateral right to divorce (Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs 2009; Begum 2015). Protection measures for victims of sexual assault are weak, and there is no comprehensive law against domestic violence (Salem 2015).

**The United States** ranks 22 overall, with key deficits pulling the country's ranking 13 places below its global ranking on income per capita. On the inclusion dimension, the United States is on par with other countries in the top 25. However, its inclusion score is depressed by women's low share of parliamentary seats (fewer than one in five: together with Croatia, the United States is the only top 25 country below the global average on this indicator). While countries in much of the world have boosted women's representation through some type of quota, the United States has not. At current rates of progress, according to the Center for American Women in Politics, it will take more than a century to reach gender parity (Silva 2016).

On justice metrics, the United States ranks among its peers in the top tercile. The World Bank's *Women, Business, and the Law* report records no legal differences between men and women. However, the United States has not passed a constitutional amendment barring discrimination against women nor is it a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All

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Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is also notable that the United States has no legal mandate for equal pay—the gender wage gap in full-time employment averages 20 cents on the dollar and is much wider for non-White women—and the United States and Papua New Guinea are the only countries without legally guaranteed paid maternity leave (ILO 2014). Moreover, the lack of childcare and paid maternity leave make the United States an outlier among rich countries.

The United States ranks 66th on the WPS Index security dimension due primarily to rates of intimate partner violence that are more than 10 percentage points above

the mean for developed countries. U.S. society faces a unique crisis of lethal violence against women, given the intersections between domestic abuse and the widespread availability of firearms. The risk of homicide for women in a domestic violence situation increases five-fold when a gun is present (Everytown for Gun Safety 2014). As for community security, the United States has an unusually large gender gap: 46 percent of men report feeling safe walking alone at night in their community but only 26 percent of women do, a gender gap of 20 percentage points. The average global gender gap is 7 percentage points.

