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Women in Management Worldwide

Progress and Prospects

Second Edition

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Women in Management Worldwide: Progress and Prospects – An Overview

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Women are the most underutilized natural resource in the world.

CARE, USA.

Introduction

Women continue to enter the workplace in increasing numbers in all developed countries. Several factors account for this trend. An increasing number of economies have become industrialized, the service sector has grown opening up positions for women, and growth in public and not-for profit sectors have created new opportunities for women. Finally, attitudes towards working women, particularly women with children, as well as political and legal initiatives, have supported this trend.

However, the pace of advancement for women managers and professions continues to be slow and uneven in different countries and cultures (Barreto, Ryan and Schmitt, 2009; Burke, 2009; Burke and Mattis, 2007; Helfat, Harris and Wolfson, 2006; Tarr-Whelan, 2009). In many cases, these women have invested in preparation for careers by undertaking higher education, with the proportion of women in university now equal to or greater than that of men. Women tend to enter the workplace at levels similar to men, with similar credentials and expectations, but their career paths quickly begin to diverge (Burke and Mattis, 2005; Burke and Nelson, 2002). Furthermore, women are obtaining the necessary experience for advancement but still fall short, a finding observed in all developed countries (Adler and Izraeli, 1988; Davidson and Burke, 2004; Wirth, 2001). Women continue to be paid less than men doing similar types of

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work (Blau and Kahn, 2007). It should also be noted there are indications that the worldwide economic recession may be facilitating an increasing number of women's employment into part-time jobs in some countries (for example, UK and USA), it may also be having a more determined impact on full-time female employment. In the UK for example, during the third quarter of 2009, women suffered a greater loss of full-time jobs (68,000) compared to men (12,000) (Office for National Statistics, 2009).

Why should organizations be interested in developing and using the talents of women? Schwartz (1992) offered several reasons why supporting the aspirations of talented women makes sound business sense. Organizations that do this get the best people for leadership positions, providing senior-level male executives experience in working with successful women. Supporting capable women signals to women employees, and both male and female clients and customers, that women will be treated similarly to men, and role models for junior women managers will be available. Finally, supporting qualified and talented women ensures that all managerial jobs will be filled with strong individuals. These benefits are particularly important given the acknowledged shortage of effective managerial talent (Burke and Cooper, 2006), the failure of at least half the current managerial incumbents in performing their jobs successfully (Hogan and Hogan, 2001), the self-acknowledged failures of organizations to develop managerial talent (Fulmer and Conger, 2004), and the current "war for talent" (Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod, 2001). It makes no sense to ignore the talents of half the population.

In Japan for example, only 0.8 percent of CEOs are women versus 10 percent in the UK. Less than 10 percent of Japanese managers are women versus 43 percent in the US and Japan is currently having a severe shortage of talent and does not encourage immigration (Catalyst, 2007). The only viable solution to this talent shortfall is for Japan to do a much better job of developing and advancing qualified women.

Shriver (2009), based on the fact that half the US workforce is now female, used the phrase "female nation" to highlight the fact that this body of employed women is going to bring about changes to men, women, families, organizations and society as a whole. More working women now have children. An increasing number of women are earning more salary than their husbands/partners do. These facts are changing the nature of families, and the roles that men and women play. Children want both their mothers and fathers to come home from work less tired and less stressed. More men are now shouldering

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home and family responsibilities. Dual earner families need to negotiate who is responsible for what and flexibly respond to changes as they arise. Both women and men are increasingly desirous of workplace flexibility and lower workloads and job demands (Shriver, 2009).

In addition, it is clear that women are becoming an increasing economic force in terms of their purchasing influence and power (Silverstein and Sayre, 2009a; 2009b). Silverstein and Sayre indicate that women in the USA control \$20 trillion in consumer spending and this figure is expected to increase. In addition, women earn about \$11 trillion in total yearly income and this figure will also rise. Women make the major purchasing decisions in several areas (for example, home furnishings, vacations, automobiles). Women represent the largest market opportunity in the world (Wittenberg-Cox and Maitland, 2008). Yet women get little help at home (Jones, Burke and Westman, 2006) and are too often ignored by manufacturers and service providers. Tapping into these women represents a unique organizational competitive advantage, more likely to be realized if more women influence organizational decision making.

Tarr-Whelan (2009) makes a strong case for increasing the numbers of women in senior executive and key decision-making roles in organizations. The key point is using the talents of half the population that previously have been ignored. She suggests that having 30 percent of these leadership positions filled by qualified women represents a “tipping point” that puts the influence on business issues and off gender. Konrad, Kramer and Erkut (2008) also suggest that having three or more women on a corporate board of directors serves as a similar critical mass or tipping point.

What do women bring to the table? Tarr-Whelan (2009) identifies five benefits organizations realize from having more women in senior jobs:

- Higher profits, more risk awareness, less hypercompetitive and a greater ability to survive financial downturns.
- Policies that contribute to individual and societal health – education, families, entrepreneurship.
- A stronger integration of work and family leading to higher productivity and quality of life.
- Increased commitment to both personal and corporate responsibility and broader and more long-term planning.

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- Management that reflects the twenty-first century –teamwork, participative decision making.

But why are there still so few women in top management? Suggestions that address this question have been offered by Catalyst (2002; 2007). In 2002, Catalyst's survey on 20 European countries and the USA, found stereotypes and preconceptions of women's roles ranked the top barrier to women's advancement (Catalyst, 2002). Indeed, these findings were once again replicated more recently when analyzing data from 110 US corporations' Talent Management Systems and Catalyst (2007) found gender biases and stereotypes existed particularly in succession planning processes. Other career development barriers which particularly affected women and minorities included the lack of 360 degree performance appraisal.

Over a decade ago, Powell (1999) observed that men continued to dominate senior-level positions and it was difficult to eliminate bias and discrimination in the workplace. Men are likely to be more comfortable with other men – the "old boy network". Hiring and promotion decisions are often unstructured and open to bias. More recently, the Harvard Business Review (Silverstein and Sayre, 2009a; 2009b), reported on a survey of 500 companies which found that candidates for senior executive positions typically went through only one to five interviews (32 percent) and half relied on the hiring manager's "gut feeling" (a feeling that the candidate had what it takes to be successful in any job). So much for objective selection procedures and acknowledgement of "similarity–attraction" theories! Research continues to indicate that talented women at lower levels may not receive the necessary development opportunities compared to their male counterparts (Powell, 2010). Furthermore, some women may not go after higher-level jobs because of their family responsibilities and the lack of family-friendly and flexible working environments and/or an unwillingness to make the sacrifices necessary to succeed in them (Davidson and Fielden, 2003).

Morrison, White and Van Velsor (1987) reported that women had difficulties fitting into their organization's culture, were seen by men as wanting too much for themselves or for other women, or had performance difficulties. Managerial women had to walk a fine line, they had to be tough but not too tough, they had to stand on their own two feet yet ask for help when needed, and they had to take career and job risks but still perform at a high level. More than 20 years later, male-defined views of work and career success still represent the norm (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria, 2008). One consequence of these barriers is a tendency for women to leave large organizations and pursue entrepreneurial

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and/or small business careers (Belkin, 2003; Fielden and Davidson, 2005; 2010; Mattis, 2004; Moore, 2000; Moore and Buttner, 1997)

Women in Management Worldwide (2004)

Women in management research and consultancy has been undertaken in several countries, over two decades or more. We decided in 2003 that it was time to take stock on initiatives being undertaken in various countries and develop some common metrics to determine the status of women at work and women in management in these countries. We (Davidson and Burke, 2004) asked authors from 21 countries to describe the status of women in management in each of their countries in common areas (for example, women in education, country legislation supporting women's advancement). These data would permit an examination of changes over time, comparisons across countries and provide baseline information to benchmark changes in the status of women over time. These data might also shed light on the role of country culture on women's work experiences and career progress.

We solicited chapters from countries in all major regions of the world, both developed and developing. It is interesting to note that some invited contributors declined as their countries did not systematically collect information of the kind we wanted to include. This resulted in our previous publication of the highly successful and award winning book *Women in Management Worldwide* (Davidson and Burke, 2004).

Women in Management Worldwide (2011)

Six years later in 2009, we decided to update our first book and asked some of the original contributing authors to update their chapters in describing the current status of women at work and in management and reflecting whatever had changed in the intervening six or seven years. In addition, we also invited a number of new cultures and included some new countries. Our objectives for this book were similar to those underlying the 2004 edition:

- Understand more about the status of women at work and women in management in a number of countries around the world.
- Continue the process of collecting common information to capture both trends over time and support comparisons across countries.

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- Facilitate more cross-cultural research in these areas.
- Encourage more collaborative research across countries in these areas.
- Continue to raise the issue of utilizing the best talent available.

This book is divided into seven parts. These are: European Union countries (France, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom); Europe (Norway and Russia); North and Central America (Canada, Mexico and the United States); Australasia (Australia and New Zealand); Asia (China, Israel, Lebanon and Turkey); South America (Argentina); and Africa (South Africa). Chapters consider labour force characteristics, numbers of women pursuing education, numbers of women in management, women entrepreneurs, legislation and initiatives supporting women in the workforce, and thoughts on what the future might hold. Below we summarize some of the similarities and differences which have emerged in this book in relation to the above objectives.

Similarities and Differences between Countries

LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

The proportion of women in the paid workforces in all but two countries (China and Turkey) increased, particularly among married women with children; the proportion of women in the US workforce increased only marginally and has remained stable over the past few years.

WOMEN PURSUING EDUCATION

The proportion of women entering higher education, and education in business and the professions (law, accounting, management) continues to rise in most countries with women now also comprising a higher percentage of university students than men. Figures in both the US and New Zealand have remained stable, however, with women still comprising a higher percentage of university students than men. Considering university education in general, men and women still study different specializations. Men are more often found in engineering, mathematics and the sciences; women more often in the languages and social sciences. Countries differed in the percentages of women studying business with some having more women than men (for example,

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Australia, Canada, France, Greece and Norway) and others, considerably more men than women (for example, South Africa, although white women still dominate management positions).

WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

Women have increased their participation rates in managerial and professional jobs in most countries; the rates were fairly stable in Argentina. Women generally made progress at lower-management positions but are still woefully under-represented at senior levels of management. Women in all countries still get paid less than men, often working in the same jobs. There is also continued gender segregation with more men working in engineering, construction, mining and manufacturing and more women working in human resources, marketing and public relations. There was also considerable country variation: China reported the lowest percentage of female managers and professionals (16 percent) with Australia, Canada, the UK and the US the highest, at over 30 percent.

However, it should be noted that there is still a dearth of statistics and research on certain minority groups within the female management populations in many of the 20 countries, for example, indigenous women managers, black and minority ethnic women managers, disabled women managers, lesbian and bisexual women managers, one parent women managers, women managers from different religious denominations and so on.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

There was an increasing proportion of women entrepreneurs and small business owners in almost all countries but in some countries the growth was slow (for example, Argentina) and in most countries these proportions were low (for example, Israel and Turkey). Women's entrepreneurial and small business ventures were typically very small in dollar volume and employee size, and though often working long hours, offered them employment flexibility. As well, women's entrepreneurial and small business ventures were also more likely to be in the service sector.

COUNTRY LEGISLATION

All countries had legislation in place supporting women at work, some countries more encompassing than others. There was a sense in some countries that more

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“teeth” needed to be in place to follow through on existing legislation (for example, Canada, Mexico and New Zealand). Moreover, there seemed to be great variability across countries in the interest and support of organizational employers in developing policies and programmes to support women’s career advancement. Organizations in Canada, the UK and the US seemed to be the most proactive whereas employers in Argentina, South Africa, and Turkey seemed to be the least proactive in support of their women managers and professionals. On the other hand, more countries had efforts by government units, non-governmental organizations and women’s organization/professional associations to support women’s advancement.

THE FUTURE

Despite the current global economic recession, chapter authors were, in general, cautiously optimistic about the future of their women managers and professionals. As the countries represented in this collection started at different places, issues that the contributors thought needed addressing in the future also varied. These included closing the education gap (for example, Turkey), putting more teeth in country legislation (for example, Australia and China) and getting more organizations to proactively support women’s development (for example, New Zealand). There is no question that progress has been made and continues to be realized but some of our authors have described it as glacial. While some writers have attempted to project when true equality would be achieved (half the board members women, half the senior executive jobs held by women) – estimated at 100 to 200 years down the road – many thought this was unlikely to ever be realized.

Putting it All Together

When we summarize some of the overall findings of the material representing 20 countries included in this book, certain and common themes emerge. First, women’s participation rates in the workforce have increased in almost all countries, but occupational segregation still exists. Childcare was an important concern for women in almost all countries. Second, women had increased their participation rates in university education, equaling or exceeding that of men in most cases. Third, the proportion of women in management has increased but still remained very low at the higher levels of organizations particularly at board level. There was also considerable variability among countries in the percentage of women in management. Fourth, women increasingly moved

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into small business and entrepreneurship in most countries to earn income. Female entrepreneurs tended to develop small businesses and earn less income from them than did men. Fifth, an increasing number of countries developed legislation to support women at work and women in management. Unfortunately it seemed as if these initiatives lacked teeth in many cases. Legislation did have the desired effect of increasing women's representation in the workforce and working toward creating a more equal workplace experience (for example, Norway and Spain). Sixth, there were only a few countries in which employing organizations developed initiatives to specifically support the development and advancement of women (for example, Canada, UK and US). Seventh, the data indicated some positive developments in several countries (for example, more women in education, higher levels of country support for women in the workplace, changing family roles and responsibilities, improved employment (Jones, Burke and Westman, 2006) and labour market conditions), but several aspects seemed to be slow to change (few women in senior management, women paid less than men, bias and discrimination).

These chapters represented countries most likely to be active in supporting managerial and professional women, and collecting data on the status of their women in the workforce. As we found in the 2004 volume, there was considerable variation among these countries in this volume on such indicators as the percentage of the labour force that is female, percentage of managers and professionals that are women, legislation supporting women's advancement and organizational efforts to develop and advance women.

Certainly, there were some positive aspects in the 20 countries. These included: more women in management and in the professions; more supportive government practices; changing family roles and responsibilities; changes in demographic characteristics offering more opportunities for women; and improved economic and labour market conditions for women. Nevertheless, there were also several disheartening aspects across the 20 countries. These included: a slow pace of change and improvement; women still faced discrimination and gender, ethnic, cultural and religious stereotyping; continuing male domination at senior-management and corporate board levels; and some plateauing in societal and legislative support for women's advancement (for example, Canada).

This left us with the question of whether the cup was "half full" or "half empty". These countries included in this book were among the "best" countries as far as women's progress was concerned. But whether one uses the metaphors

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of a glass ceiling (Barreto, Ryan and Schmitt, 2009), concrete walls, sticky floors or a labyrinth (Eagly and Carli, 2007), women's advancement and progress had fallen short of expectations. The International Labor Organization updated the Wirth (2001) report in 2004 (ILO, 2004), and provides yearly reviews on the status of women at work, and came to similar conclusions.

Adopting a Broader Lens to Women's Advancement

Since we both teach in schools of management and business, we have usually focused our work on women in the private sector. Our chapter authors, however, also examined women in the public sector, women in the voluntary sector and women in government. There was a higher percentage of women in management in the government and voluntary sectors in some countries. It was sometimes difficult to combine percentages of women in these sectors since we did not know the total number of managers. Catalyst (2007) (a New York City-based women's advisory and research group), has provided these figures for 13 of the 20 countries included in this collection. These figures, representing the percentage of women legislators, senior government officials and managers, are shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Percentage of women legislators, senior government officials and managers – 2007

Country	%
Argentina	23.2
Australia	37.6
Canada	36.2
China	16.5
France	36.9
Israel	28.9
Mexico	27.3
New Zealand	39.6
Norway	32.9
Russia	38.9
Spain	31.7
United Kingdom	34.5
United States	41.8

Source: Adapted from Catalyst (2007) Women in Management, Global Comparison

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These range from a high of 41.8 percent in the US and 39.6 percent in New Zealand to a low of 16.5 percent in China and 23.2 percent in Argentina, and are generally consistent with the picture conveyed in these chapters.

The Bigger Picture

As this chapter was being written, stories about the experiences and progress of women worldwide appeared in the media. These stories, as often as not, referred to women in the workforce other than managers and professionals, and from a variety of countries, most not included in this collection, that seemed relevant to understanding the findings in this collection. These stories place this volume on managerial and professional women into a broader context and seemed to shed some light on the limited gains we observed in the 2004 and 2010 collections.

We would like to get behind the numbers and focus on the tangible “flesh and blood” experiences of women, and men, in several countries through events and stories reported in various media. It should be clearly noted that our sample of stories and events is non-random and likely non-representative of the experiences of women and men, in the workplace worldwide.

THE GOOD NEWS

Considerable “firsts” were reported

- A Canadian woman, Stacey Allister, replaced a man, Larry Scott, as CEO of the Women’s Tennis Association.
- The first woman was awarded a Nobel prize in Economics in 2009. In addition a total of five women received Nobel prizes in 2009, the highest total ever awarded in any one year.
- In June 2009, Venice appointed its first female gondolier, Giorgia Boscoli, their first female gondolier in 900 years.
- The appointment by President Barack Obama and later senate confirmation of Judge Sonia Sotomayor, a Latina woman, for the US Supreme Court. Of the 111 Supreme Court Justices, 108 have been white males. She is the third woman and first Hispanic Justice.

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- Hilary Clinton was appointed Secretary of State by President Obama, succeeding another woman, Condoleeza Rice, and the earlier Madeleine Albright.
- Ursula Burns became the first African American woman to lead a major US corporation (Xerox, June 2009) succeeding another women, Anne Mulcahy.
- Anne Giardini became the first female president of Weyerhaeuser, the large US forest product company in 2008.
- India (June 2009) elected its first female speaker of their parliament. (Meira Kumar); described as a tribute to the women of India for the contributions they have made to their country.
- Lithuania elected its first female president in May 2009, Dalia Grybavskavite.
- The first woman was elected to the Kuwait parliament in 2009.
- Saudi Arabia appointed its first woman minister, Nora bind Abdulla Hal-Fayuiz, as Deputy Education Minister of a new department for female students.
- Women were active in Iran's resistance movement in the recent election results controversy (June 2009).
- The Iranian leadership appointed three women ministers in August 2009, the first women appointments since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.
- Women are making great progress on the boards of not-for-profit organizations in Canada, with a representation about equal to mens, based on a study of 240 boards.
- The Egyptian parliament passed a law giving women a 64 seat quota in their lower chamber, one-eighth of the total.
- Muslim women in Indonesia are making significant gains as both managers and entrepreneurs.

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- Women were just as ambitious as men and desirous of more job responsibilities as men in a US study reported by the New York City-based Families and Work Institute.
- The United Nations voted (October 2009) to create a higher-level agency to promote women's rights. This new agency will put four under-staffed and under-funded women's units under one roof. It is obviously too early to tell if this new agency will get the funding and support it needs to be effective.
- There is some evidence that having more women on boards of directors and in senior management jobs may be associated with better organizational performance but the reasons for this are open to debate. A study recently conducted in France showed that companies having 38 percent or more women in executive jobs had their stock fall less in 2008 than companies with a smaller percentage of women executives.
- Having more women in senior corporate jobs and on boards of directors is a possible solution to the economic mess that advanced countries found themselves in 2008/2009. According to the Chicago-based Hedge Fund Research in 2009, hedge funds run by women have fallen only half as much during the financial crisis as those managed by men.
- Several highly rated schools of business have developed courses for women interested in learning more about themselves and their careers (for example, Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, the Stanford University school of business and INSEAD) and the Center for Creative Leadership has offered such courses for several years.

Taken together, these examples of "good news" add some optimism to the sense of progress that women have made at work and in their careers.

Implications

There were some tangible signs of progress, though uneven, and indications of stalling and back-sliding. More women are now in the workforce. More women

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are getting the necessary education and experience to equip them for success in the workforce. There continue to be many “firsts”.

However, the fact that we are still celebrating “firsts” is disheartening. The bad news includes evidence showing little and slow progress in women’s career advancement to senior-level position, some back-sliding in terms of enforcing supportive legislation, lots of rhetoric but little action or follow through, many countries in which organizations seem to not be doing anything specifically to develop and support their women managers and professionals, along with a series of worldwide events revealing some deeply rooted societal biases towards women (International Labor Organization, 2004).

There seemed to be only modest change in our findings from our Davidson and Burke *Women in Management Worldwide* 2004 volume. It is likely that the six to seven year interval was not long enough to bring about large improvements.

This volume also identified many of the difficulties in undertaking international comparisons. First, some countries did not have data in some categories even though we invited contributors from “developed” nations. Second, the definitions and categories used to classify features of their workforces differed as well.

Our focus on managerial and professional women reflected, in part, our affiliation with leading schools of business and management, and the undergraduate and MBA students that we teach. Undoubtedly, many of our female students become successful professionals and managers. In addition, we both live in developed industrialized, advanced countries (Canada and the UK). Women in our home countries, while facing unique challenges because of their gender, are also supported in several important ways. This legitimate emphasis, however, may have blinded us to the reality of a significantly larger number of women in the workplace. In addition, appreciating the reality and experiences of these women in a wider range of countries, highlighted the huge challenges these women face and why addressing these obstacles is also likely to advance the cause of their more educated and privileged “sisters”.

The work and life experiences of women in several countries in the developing world indicated many distressing features (for example, bias, hostility towards women, huge restrictions on women’s choices). Sadly, women worldwide still lack basic rights such as education, freedom from violence, opportunities to pursue what many of us see as taken-for-granted life options,

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and justice in the workplace and in their societies. We hope, in time, that the circumstances in these countries will change to provide a higher quality of life and access to more equality of opportunity among women and girls.

We believe that efforts must be made along at least two inter-related tracks simultaneously if greater progress is to be realized. One track, consistent with the purpose of this collection, involves a continuation of efforts to support the education and advancement of women into professional and managerial jobs and create organizational climates that embrace diversity and equality in the workplace (Davidson and Fielden, 2003; Powell, 2010). Having more women in decision-making roles will help change the character of these decisions and more decisions will take women's needs into account and improve not only their lot in life but organizational and societal performance. There is emerging evidence that enacting country legislation to equalize/improve the proportions of women serving on corporate boards of directors or at higher-level managerial jobs does work, though not as well as expected (see the experiences of Norway and Spain). More organizations need to be convinced that supporting and developing the talents of their female employees makes good business sense. Women's associations need to continue their pioneering efforts. The second track is to tackle the pervasive negative attitudes, behaviours and experiences that face women worldwide. Clearly, the evidence presented from the 20 countries represented in this book indicated that while a country's political, economic and legislative context does appear to have some impact on women's participation in managerial roles (particularly at senior levels), the greatest influences are more often driven by deeply rooted socio-cultural traditions and values. Efforts need to be made at the societal (macro) level before significant progress will be seen at the levels of individual women (micro). Political and business leaders need to speak up for the human rights of women in many countries around the world through umbrella groups such as the United Nations (UN), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the G20 and the G7 associations.

There is also an important role for members of the academic and research communities. We need to continue to collect information on the status of women at work (including frequently ignored and "invisible" minority groups) and their experiences in the workplace. Communication of the benefits of utilizing the talents of all employees must continue. Assistance must be provided to organizations interested and willing to support the development and progress of their women employees. More efforts must be made to help women re-enter the workforce after time away (Hewlett and Luce, 2005; Hewlett, Luce,

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Shiller and Southwell, 2004). Business programmes need to become more “friendly” to women students and business schools need to include diversity and gender issues as part of their curriculum. In addition, some curriculum issues seem particularly critical in order to fully understand the barriers to women’s advancement and benchmarks for progress. These include women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Cacace, 2009; Burke and Mattis, 2007; Ceci and Williams, 2004) and women serving on corporate boards of directors (Burke and Mattis, 2000; Vinnicombe, Singh, Burke, Bilimoria and Huse, 2008). As Konrad, Dramer and Erkut (2008) have shown, a small increase in numbers of women serving on a corporate board of directors makes a huge difference.

In the words of Kristof and WuDunn (2009):

The world is awakening to a powerful truth: women and girls aren’t the problem; they’re the solution.

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