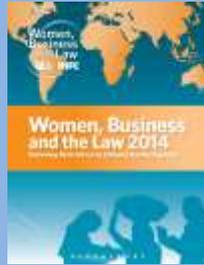


# Women, Business and the Law

*Women, Business and the Law 2014* analyzes laws that impact women entrepreneurs and employees in 143 economies across six topics and a pilot dataset covering violence against women laws. The report seeks to assess the gender gap in policy variables using quantitative and objective data.



## Overview

The *Women, Business and the Law* (WBL) report is a publication of the World Bank Group. It draws on the experience of the World Bank Group's *Doing Business* project to develop objective indicators of the laws and regulations affecting women's capacity to get jobs and start businesses across economies.

The *Women, Business and the Law 2014* is the third in a series. The new edition highlights reforms carried out over the past two years and expands coverage to examine legal protections addressing violence against women in a pilot set of economies. The *50 Years of Women's Legal Rights* database examines reforms in women's property rights and legal decision making ability for 100 economies in the past 50 years.

*Women, Business and the Law* provides data on gender differentiations in legal treatment covering 7 areas:

- 1) **Accessing institutions** - explores women's legal ability to interact with public authorities and the private sector in the same ways as men.
- 2) **Using property** - analyzes women's ability to own, manage, control and inherit property.
- 3) **Getting a job** - assesses restrictions on women's work such as prohibitions on working at night or in certain industries. This indicator also covers laws on maternity and paternity protection and on retirement ages.
- 4) **Providing incentives to work** - examines personal income tax liabilities, including tax credits and deductions available to women relative to men. This indicator also covers public services such as childcare and education.
- 5) **Building credit** - identifies minimum loan thresholds in private credit bureaus and public credit registries and tracks credit bureaus and registries that collect information from microfinance institutions.
- 6) **Going to court** - examines the access to small claims courts and data on whether women's testimony in court is given the same evidentiary weight as that of men.
- 7) **Protecting women from violence** - examines laws on domestic violence and the existence and scope of laws on sexual harassment.

## Some Main Findings

In almost 90% of the economies covered, there is at least one legal difference that may hinder women's economic opportunities.

In 79 economies laws restrict the types of jobs that women can do. The most extensive restrictions are in ECA.

All 14 of the economies covered in the MENA region have 10 or more legal differences.

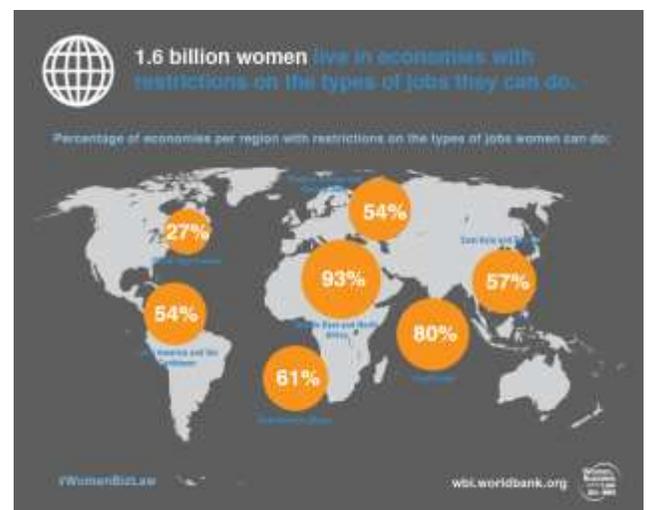
In 15 economies husbands can object to their wives working and prevent them from accepting jobs.

In the past 50 years, over half of the restrictions on women's property rights and ability to conduct legal transactions were removed in 100 economies examined.

Of the economies measured, 76 have established explicit legislation addressing domestic violence but only 32 have specific provisions on sexual harassment in schools.

## Key objectives

- Identify potential challenges and improve understanding of how legal and regulatory environments shape women's economic opportunities;
- Create awareness to inform policy discussions on gender differentiations in the law;
- Inform policymakers on gender differentiated laws in their countries and areas of action on women's economic rights;
- Further country level and cross-country research efforts on linkages between legal differentiations and outcomes for women.



It is the only cross-country, objectively measured quantitative indicator reflecting women's rights in this sphere which is comparable across economies and over time, complementing indices that focus on quantitative outcome variables and qualitative assessments.