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# UNIFEM AT A GLANCE

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## Reducing Women's Poverty and Exclusion

Since poverty traps women in multiple layers of discrimination and hinders their ability to claim their rights, ending feminized poverty has always been a core UNIFEM priority. Not only do women bear a disproportionate burden of the world's poverty, but in some cases, globalization has widened the gap, with women losing more than their share of jobs, benefits and labour rights. From tax systems to trade regimes, however, economic policies and institutions still mostly fail to take gender disparities into account. With too few seats at the tables where economic decisions are made, women themselves have little chance of rectifying the deepening of existing inequalities.

### UNIFEM Responds: Strategies That Make a Difference

UNIFEM helps women reshape conditions at both ends of the economic spectrum, enlarging women's participation in both the overarching policies governing resource flows and the everyday practicalities of gaining secure livelihoods.

***Bringing gender into trade and economic policies:*** The path out of poverty for most women requires economic frameworks that address their exclusion from the economic mainstream. UNIFEM supports efforts to make budgets, national poverty reduction strategies, data systems and trade policies close gender gaps and protect human rights.

***Expanding access to markets, goods and services:*** With many poor women either locked out of economic opportunities or into a growing number of low-wage informal jobs, UNIFEM assists women in securing the tools that offer a way out, including job training, information on labour laws and rights, credit, and access to land and water. With a focus on fostering opportunities across economic sectors, UNIFEM also helps build the capacity of economic institutions and networks to provide women with these forms of support.

### At Work Around the World

UNIFEM promotes women's empowerment, rights and gender equality globally, and through 15 sub-regional and two national offices that support programmes within and among individual countries.

#### ***Africa***

Women in nearly a dozen countries have begun working with UNIFEM on strategies to incorporate gender into national poverty reduction strategies; these have already been applied in Cape Verde, Niger and Senegal. In Rwanda, UNIFEM-brokered connections to the private sector have allowed groups of widows to sell their handicrafts on the international market. Support for the Platform for Women's Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa led the

Southern African Development Community to set up a land desk to advocate for national land policies that protect women's interests and rights.

### ***Arab States***

UNIFEM has joined with the UN Population Fund, the League of Arab States and the Centre of Arab Women to train government officials and women's organizations in the region on how to insert gender into budgets. In Egypt, Jordan and Syria, UNIFEM has worked with national statistics departments to produce census data that reflects gender differences. A project in Jordan trained women entrepreneurs to capitalize on opportunities provided by tourism.

### ***Asia and the Pacific***

In the Philippines, UNIFEM and a migrant workers' organization have started a savings and investment programme for returnees. Across South Asia, UNIFEM has assisted with the formation of networks of home-based workers that are now discussing social protection proposals with their governments.

### ***CEE/CIS***

A review of rural women entrepreneurs by UNIFEM and the UN Development Programme prompted the Romanian government to extend new forms of credit to women. In Bulgaria, Hungary and Kazakhstan, women's organizations are using UNIFEM research on the impact of globalization on women for advocating economic justice.

### ***Latin America and the Caribbean***

After several of UNIFEM's national partners in Mexico mobilized a campaign by women's groups across the country, the government agreed to assign a budget line for gender equality programmes, and require 14 ministries to report quarterly on their activities and expenditures. In Ecuador, UNIFEM helped convene over 60 women's organizations into an advocacy network for micro-credit. A series of meetings with unions, civil servants and the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations raised understanding of the gender implications of the Mercosur trade negotiations.