

## Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Most economies have already achieved the target for **gender equality** in primary school enrollment. A slightly lower number have done so in secondary school enrollment, while fewer have done so in tertiary education enrollment. In Afghanistan, Lao PDR, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam, women hold more than 25% of the **national parliamentary seats**, but in 12 economies, women hold less than 5%.

### Introduction

The target for **Goal 3** is to obtain equality of males and females in primary, secondary, and tertiary education enrollment. Equality is measured by dividing the percentage of females of the relevant age group enrolled in each educational level by the corresponding percentage of males. A ratio of 1.0 means that equal percentages of both genders are enrolled. Ratios below (above) 1.0 mean that a higher percentage of males (females) are enrolled.

While in theory the target is complete equality (i.e., ratios of 1.0), in practice ratios of 0.95 and above are accepted as sufficient approximations. Note that this leads to a gender bias in favor of females since ratios above 1.0 are always considered to meet the target. For secondary and, particularly, tertiary education, many economies report ratios well above 1.0, but these high ratios in favor of females are not interpreted as gender bias to the detriment of males.

For primary and secondary education, equality was to have been achieved in 2005, while for tertiary education the target date is 2015.

### Key Trends

Figure 3.1 shows the gender ratios for primary school enrollment for 2006 or the latest year available. Only seven of the 43 economies in Figure 3.1 have not yet achieved the target for gender equality in primary school enrollment. These economies are shown in red. Box 3.1 shows that four of these are **on track** to do so by 2015, but Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea will not achieve the target based on recent trends, with the former making only slow progress and the latter regressing.

The progress of Timor-Leste could not be measured as it has only one data point, although its 2005 index of 0.92 indicates a strong possibility of attaining the cut-off of 0.95 by 2015.

#### Box 3.1 Economies that had not Achieved Gender Equality in Primary School Enrollment by 2006 or Latest Year

##### On track

Cambodia	Pakistan
Lao PDR	Palau

##### Slow progress

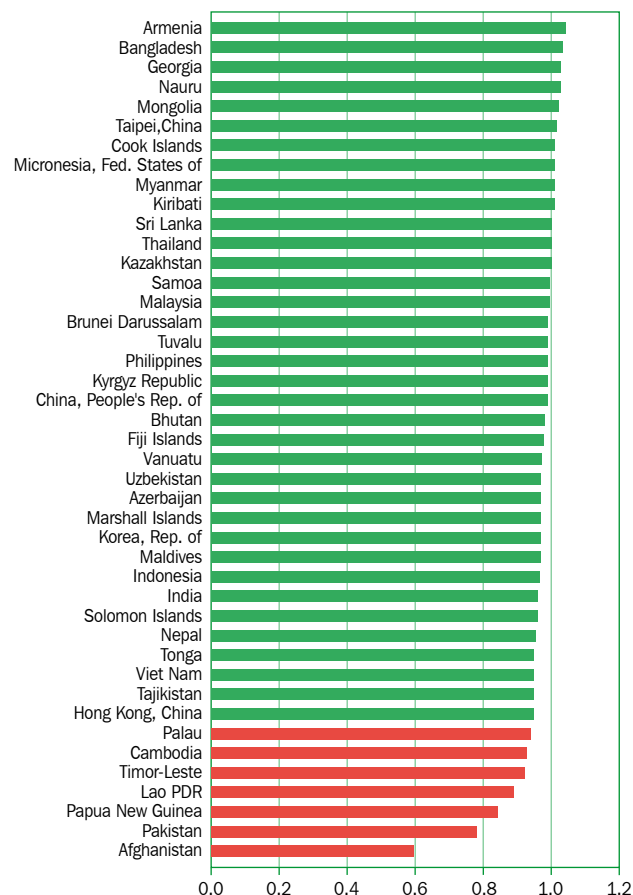
Afghanistan

##### Regressing

Papua New Guinea

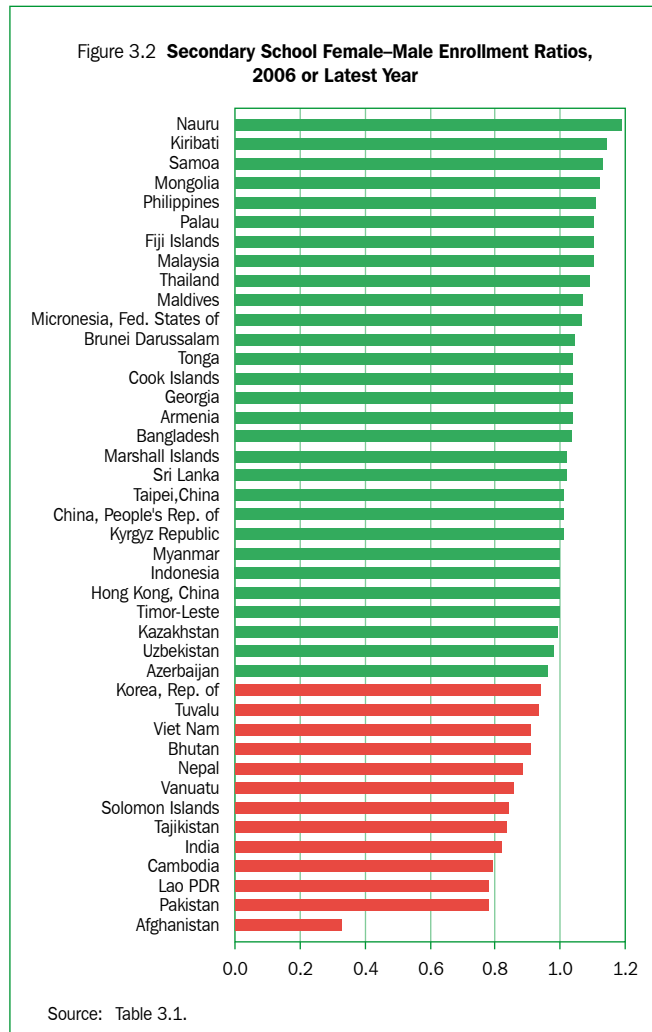
Source: Derived from Table 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Primary School Female–Male Enrollment Ratios, 2006 or Latest Year



Source: Table 3.1.

Figure 3.2 shows the gender ratios for secondary school enrollment around the year 2006. Twenty-nine of the 42 economies in Figure 3.2 had already achieved the target of gender equality in secondary school enrollment by 2006 or the latest year. These include Bangladesh, People's Republic of China (PRC), and Indonesia. The remaining 13 economies are shown in red.



Box 3.2 divides 11 economies that have not yet achieved the gender equality target into three groups. Six economies, including India and Pakistan, are **on track** to reach the target by 2015; the other five are making **slow progress** or are **regressing**. The progress of Tuvalu and Viet Nam are not assessed because the former has only one data point, while the latter has data points that are in adjacent years.

Figure 3.3 gives the gender ratios for enrollment in tertiary education for 35 economies. Nineteen economies, including the PRC, have achieved the target. The remaining 16 economies, shown in red, include Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

Box 3.2 Economies that had not Achieved Gender Equality in Secondary School Enrollment by 2006 or Latest Year

**On track**

Bhutan	Nepal
Cambodia	Pakistan
India	Solomon Islands

**Slow progress**

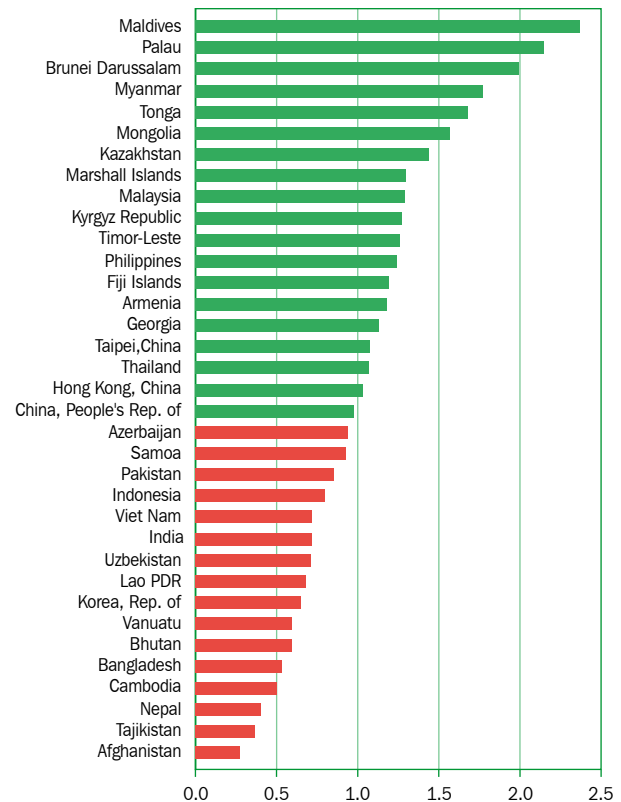
Lao PDR	Vanuatu
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**Regressing**

Afghanistan	Tajikistan
Korea, Rep. of	

Source: Derived from Table 3.1.

Figure 3.3 Tertiary Education Female–Male Enrollment Ratios, 2006 or Latest Year



The ratios in Figure 3.3 exceed 1.0 in 18 economies and, in several of these, female enrollment outstrips male enrollment by a wide margin. In Maldives and Palau, female enrollment in tertiary education is more than twice that for males. Ratios above 1.4 are reported by Brunei Darussalam, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, and Tonga.

Ratios above 1.0 become larger as the level of education rises. For primary enrollment, the highest ratio was 1.04; for secondary education it was 1.19; and for tertiary education it was 2.37. It seems that in many of the

economies in the Asia and Pacific region, females tend to carry on studying longer than males.

Box 3.3 divides into three groups 14 economies that have not achieved gender equality in tertiary education. Only Azerbaijan, Lao PDR, and Pakistan are **on track** to meet the target by 2015. Eight, including Bangladesh, India, and Indonesia are making only **slow progress**, while three are **regressing**. The progress of Afghanistan and Viet Nam is not assessed due to data limitations similar to secondary enrollment.

**Box 3.3 Economies that had not Achieved Gender Equality in Tertiary Education Enrollment by 2006 or Latest Year**

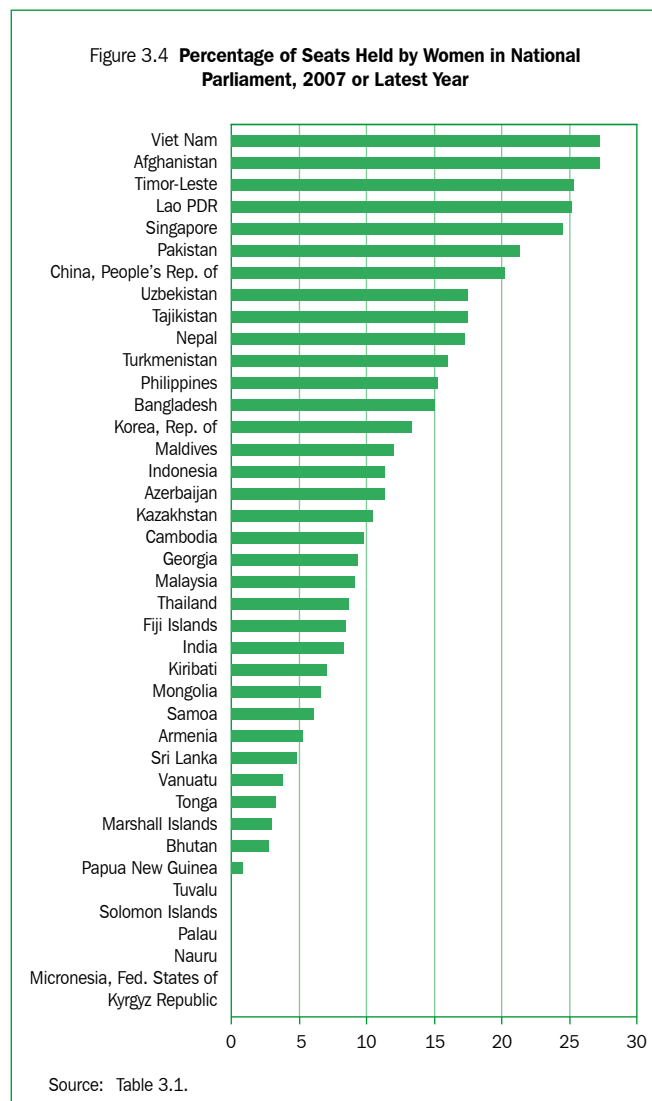
<b>On track</b>	
Azerbaijan	Pakistan
Lao PDR	
<b>Slow progress</b>	
Bangladesh	Indonesia
Bhutan	Korea, Rep. of
Cambodia	Nepal
India	Vanuatu
<b>Regressing</b>	
Samoa	Uzbekistan
Tajikistan	

Source: Derived from Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 contains two other indicators of women’s empowerment. The first is the share of female employees in nonagricultural activities. Between 1990 and 2006 or the nearest period for which data are available, the female shares fell in only two economies, while 10 developing economies recorded increasing shares from 1990 to 2000, and 2000 to 2006 or the nearest periods.

The second indicator shows the percentage of national parliamentary seats held by women. Its value as an “empowerment” indicator depends in part on the genuine power that the parliaments have to influence government policy. This is not the same in all 40 economies shown in Figure 3.4.

Women hold 25% or more of the national parliamentary seats in Afghanistan, Lao PDR, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam; and over 20% in PRC, Pakistan, and Singapore. Some historical and cultural patterns emerge from Figure 3.4. Shares are between 10% and 20% in most of the countries of the former Soviet Union. They are less than 5% in 12 economies, including a great majority of the Pacific economies.



**Data Issues and Comparability**

Enrollment rates generally follow UNESCO guidelines on definitions of different levels of education and methods of calculation. Many small Pacific countries do not have facilities for tertiary education, and students from these countries receive their tertiary education abroad. For these countries, the tertiary gender parity index is not computed.

The most reliable information on female employment in nonagricultural activities comes from household labor force surveys, but these are not conducted in all countries in the region. Alternative sources include enterprise employment surveys, population censuses, and household demographic surveys.

The percentage of women in parliament refers only to national parliaments. In some countries, a more relevant measure of empowerment would refer to the numbers of women active in government at the local or community level.

## Goal 3 Target

Table 3.1 **Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education not later than 2015**

	3.1 Ratio of Girls to Boys in Education Levels <sup>a</sup>					
	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary <sup>b</sup>	
	1991	Latest Year	1991	Latest Year	1991	Latest Year
<b>Developing Member Countries</b>						
<b>Central and West Asia</b>						
Afghanistan	0.55	0.59 (2005)	0.51	0.33 (2005)	...	0.28 (2004)
Armenia	1.01 (2001)	1.04 (2006)	1.06 (2001)	1.04 (2006)	1.11 (1999)	1.18 (2006)
Azerbaijan	0.99	0.97 (2006)	1.01	0.96 (2006)	0.67	0.94 (2006)
Georgia	1.00	1.03 (2006)	0.97	1.04 (2006)	1.18	1.13 (2006)
Kazakhstan	0.99	1.00 (2007)	1.03	0.99 (2007)	1.15 (1999)	1.44 (2007)
Kyrgyz Republic	0.99 (1999)	0.99 (2006)	1.02	1.01 (2006)	1.04 (1999)	1.27 (2006)
Pakistan	0.68 (2000)	0.78 (2006)	0.48	0.78 (2006)	0.58	0.85 (2006)
Tajikistan	0.98	0.95 (2006)	0.86 (1999)	0.83 (2006)	0.62	0.37 (2006)
Turkmenistan	...	...	...	...	...	...
Uzbekistan	0.98	0.97 (2007)	0.91	0.98 (2007)	0.82 (1999)	0.71 (2007)
<b>East Asia</b>						
China, People's Rep. of	0.93	0.99 (2006)	0.75	1.01 (2006)	0.53	0.98 (2006)
Hong Kong, China	1.01	0.95 (2006)	1.05	1.00 (2006)	0.96 (2003)	1.03 (2006)
Korea, Rep. of	1.01	0.97 (2007)	0.97	0.94 (2007)	0.49	0.65 (2007)
Mongolia	1.02	1.02 (2006)	1.14	1.12 (2006)	1.89	1.57 (2006)
Taipei, China	1.01	1.02 (2005)	1.04	1.01 (2005)	0.96	1.08 (2005)
<b>South Asia</b>						
Bangladesh	0.99 (1999)	1.03 (2004)	1.01 (1999)	1.03 (2004)	0.51 (1999)	0.53 (2005)
Bhutan	0.85 (1999)	0.98 (2006)	0.81 (1999)	0.91 (2006)	0.58 (1999)	0.59 (2006)
India	0.77	0.96 (2006)	0.60	0.82 (2005)	0.54	0.72 (2006)
Maldives	1.01 (1999)	0.97 (2006)	1.07 (1999)	1.07 (2006)	...	2.37 (2004)
Nepal	0.63	0.95 (2006)	0.46	0.89 (2006)	0.33	0.40 (2004)
Sri Lanka	0.96	1.00 (2005)	1.09	1.02 (2004)	0.55	...
<b>Southeast Asia</b>						
Brunei Darussalam <sup>c</sup>	0.94	0.99 (2006)	1.09	1.04 (2006)	1.98 (1999)	1.99 (2006)
Cambodia	0.81	0.93 (2006)	0.43	0.79 (2006)	0.33 (2000)	0.50 (2006)
Indonesia	0.98	0.96 (2006)	0.83	1.00 (2006)	0.76 (2001)	0.79 (2005)
Lao PDR	0.79	0.89 (2006)	0.62	0.78 (2006)	0.49 (1999)	0.68 (2006)
Malaysia	0.99	1.00 (2005)	1.05	1.10 (2005)	1.02 (1999)	1.29 (2005)
Myanmar	0.97	1.01 (2006)	0.99	1.00 (2006)	1.61 (1999)	1.77 (2001)
Philippines	0.99	0.99 (2006)	1.04	1.11 (2006)	1.42	1.24 (2006)
Singapore	0.97	...	0.93	...	0.71	...
Thailand	0.98	1.00 (2006)	0.96	1.09 (2006)	1.16 (1999)	1.07 (2006)
Viet Nam	0.93	0.95 (2000)	0.90 (1999)	0.91 (2000)	0.76 (1999)	0.72 (2000)
<b>The Pacific</b>						
Cook Islands	0.95 (1999)	1.01 (2005)	1.08 (1999)	1.04 (2005)	...	...
Fiji Islands	1.00	0.98 (2006)	0.95	1.10 (2006)	1.20 (2003)	1.20 (2005)
Kiribati	1.01 (1999)	1.01 (2005)	1.18 (1999)	1.14 (2005)	...	...
Marshall Islands	0.98 (1999)	0.97 (2007)	1.06 (1999)	1.02 (2007)	1.29 (2001)	1.30 (2003)
Micronesia, Fed. States of	0.99 (2004)	1.01 (2007)	...	1.07 (2005)	...	...
Nauru	1.16 (2000)	1.03 (2007)	1.21 (2000)	1.19 (2007)	...	...
Palau	0.93 (1999)	0.94 (2005)	1.07 (1999)	1.10 (2004)	2.35 (2000)	2.15 (2002)
Papua New Guinea	0.85	0.84 (2006)	0.62	...	0.55 (1999)	...
Samoa	1.02	1.00 (2005)	1.96	1.13 (2005)	1.04 (1999)	0.93 (2001)
Solomon Islands	0.87	0.96 (2005)	0.61	0.84 (2005)	...	...
Timor-Leste	...	0.92 (2005)	...	1.00 (2005)	...	1.26 (2002)
Tonga	0.98	0.95 (2006)	1.04	1.04 (2006)	1.29 (1999)	1.68 (2004)
Tuvalu	1.02 (1999)	0.99 (2006)	...	0.93 (2001)	...	...
Vanuatu	0.96	0.97 (2007)	0.80	0.86 (2004)	0.57 (2002)	0.59 (2004)
<b>Developed Member Countries</b>						
Australia	0.99	1.00 (2006)	1.03	0.95 (2006)	1.19	1.28 (2006)
Japan	1.00	1.00 (2006)	1.02	1.00 (2006)	0.65	0.88 (2006)
New Zealand	0.99	1.00 (2006)	1.02	1.05 (2006)	1.14	1.51 (2006)

continued.

## Goal 3 Target

Table 3.1 **Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education not later than 2015** (continued)

	3.2 Share of Women in Wage Employment in the Nonagricultural Sector (percent)			3.3 Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliament (percent)		
	1990	2000	2006	1990	2000	2007
<b>Developing Member Countries</b>						
<b>Central and West Asia</b>						
Afghanistan	17.8	...	...	3.7	...	27.3
Armenia	50.8 (1997)	47.3	45.7	35.6	3.1	5.3
Azerbaijan	43.3 (1997)	43.6	50.2	12.0 (1997)	12.0	11.3
Georgia	...	49.2 (1999)	48.6 (2005)	6.8 (1997)	7.2	9.4
Kazakhstan	...	48.4 (2001)	49.4 (2004)	13.4 (1997)	10.4	10.4
Kyrgyz Republic	48.5 (1996)	45.8	52.2	1.4 (1997)	1.4	0.0
Pakistan	6.6	7.4	10.7	10.1	2.3 (1999)	21.3
Tajikistan	40.0 (1991)	46.4 (1996)	...	2.8 (1997)	2.8	17.5
Turkmenistan	39.9 (1995)	42.1 (2002)	...	26.0	26.0	16.0
Uzbekistan	45.8 (1991)	43.5 (1995)	...	6.0 (1997)	6.8	17.5
<b>East Asia</b>						
China, People's Rep. of	37.8	39.2 (1999)	...	21.3	21.8	20.3
Hong Kong, China	41.2	44.8	48.1	...	...	...
Korea, Rep. of	38.1	40.1	42.0	2.0	3.7	13.4
Mongolia	50.3 (1993)	50.4	53.1 (2005)	24.9	7.9	6.6
Taipei, China	...	...	...	...	...	...
<b>South Asia</b>						
Bangladesh	17.6 (1991)	22.9	...	10.3	9.1	15.1 <sup>d</sup> (2006)
Bhutan	...	19.0 (1999)	...	2.0	2.0	2.7
India	12.7	16.6	18.1 (2005)	5.0	9.0	8.3
Maldives	31.6 (1995)	36.7	38.6	6.3	6.0 (2001)	12.0
Nepal	...	15.1 (1999)	...	6.1	5.9	17.3
Sri Lanka	39.1	46.0	44.5	4.9	4.9	4.9
<b>Southeast Asia</b>						
Brunei Darussalam <sup>c</sup>	19.5 (1994)	30.3	30.3 (2003)	...	...	...
Cambodia	...	51.9	51.9 (2004)	5.8 (1997)	8.2	9.8
Indonesia	29.2	31.7	29.3	12.4	8.0 (2001)	11.3
Lao PDR	...	...	50.2 (2005)	6.3	21.2	25.2
Malaysia	37.8	36.7	38.1 (2004)	5.1	10.4 (2001)	9.1
Myanmar	40.6	...	...	...	...	...
Philippines	40.3	41.1	41.8	9.1	12.4	15.3
Singapore	42.5 (1991)	45.4 (1999)	49.5	4.9	4.3	24.5
Thailand	45.3	46.1	47.3	2.8	5.6	8.7
Viet Nam	50.1 (1996)	48.2	46.4 (2004)	17.7	26.0	27.3
<b>The Pacific</b>						
Cook Islands	38.4	38.2 (1993)	...	6.0 (1995)	8.0 (1999)	...
Fiji Islands	29.9	33.2	30.6 (2005)	4.3 (1997)	11.3	8.5 (2006)
Kiribati	...	37.5	...	0.0	4.9	7.1
Marshall Islands	...	...	33.2 (2005)	...	3.0 (2001)	3.0
Micronesia, Fed. States of	34.0 (1994)	34.0	...	0.0 (1997)	0.0	0.0
Nauru	...	...	...	5.6	0.0	0.0
Palau	39.0	40.0	...	0.0 (1997)	0.0	0.0
Papua New Guinea	27.9	32.1	...	0.0	1.8	0.9
Samoa	31.7 (1991)	30.2	...	0.0	8.2	6.1
Solomon Islands	23.0 (1986)	30.8 (1999)	...	0.0	2.0	0.0
Timor-Leste	...	35.0 (2001)	...	...	26.1 (2003)	25.3
Tonga	...	35.7 (1996)	38.6 (2003)	0.0	0.0 (2001)	3.3
Tuvalu	...	34.3 (2002)	33.9 (2004)	7.7	0.0	0.0
Vanuatu	38.0 (1989)	45.1 (1999)	...	4.3	0.0	3.8
<b>Developed Member Countries</b>						
Australia	44.6	48.1	48.9	6.1	22.4	24.7
Japan	38.0	40.0	41.6	1.4	4.6	9.4
New Zealand	44.9	46.3	47.0	14.4	29.2	32.2

a The ratio is a gender parity index, measured as the ratio of female-to-male value of the gross enrollment ratios at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education.

b There is no tertiary education in Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu. In Maldives, tertiary education became available only recently.

c Brunei Darussalam is not a developing member country but an unclassified regional member country of ADB.

d The parliament was dissolved on 27 October 2006, in view of elections that are yet to take place. Women held 52 of the 345 seats in the outgoing parliament.

Sources: Millennium Indicators Database Online (UNSD 2008); The Pacific Islands Regional Millennium Development Goals Report 2004 (SPC 2004); for Taipei, China: Ministry of Education.