country has fully closed its gender gap on the Health and Survival subindex. It has also managed to fully re-close its Educational Attainment gender gap after a re-opening for the first time last year.

Slovenia (8) moves up a spot due to improvements on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex and the Wage equality for similar work indicator. With nearly 79% of its overall gender gap closed, it is the strongest performing country in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Since 2006, it has closed approximately 16% of its gender gap, making it one of the fastest-improving countries in the world, although its gender gaps on both the Educational Attainment and Health and Survival subindexes are yet to be fully closed.

Similarly, New Zealand (9) climbs one rank due to improving its position on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, with higher female labour force participation. It is yet to fully close its Health and Survival gender gap; and, for the first time since 2008, its Educational Attainment gender gap has re-opened. The country also maintains its strong Political Empowerment subindex score, despite dropping a spot to 16th.

Nicaragua (10) re-enters the Index top ten for the first time since 2014. With 78% of its overall gender gap closed, it remains the best performer in the Latin America and the Caribbean region for the fifth year running. It has fully closed the gender gap on the Educational Attainment and Health and Survival indexes, and ranks fourth in the world on Political Empowerment, with more than 50% of its political gender gap now closed. However, it ranks 92nd on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex and its economic gender gap remains wide. Since 2006, Nicaragua has closed approximately 19% of its overall gender gap—making it one of the fastest-improving countries in the world.

Performance by Region and Country
The Global Gender Gap Index reveals that all countries can do more to close the gender gap. Across the Index, there are only five countries that have closed 80% of the gap or more. In addition, there are 64 countries that have closed between 70% and 80% of their gender gap. A further 65 countries have closed between 60% and 70%, while 10 countries have closed between 50% and 60%. In 2016, no country had closed less than 50% of their overall gender gap. However, there is wide variety in progress on closing the gender gap in every world region, with both success stories and underperforming countries in each. Table 5 (page 14) displays this year’s rankings by regional classification, organized by rank within each regional group.

Figure 3 (page 16) shows the average gap that remains to be closed in each world region, based on the Report’s updated regional classification. At a global level, only two regions—Western Europe and North America.
Part 1: Measuring the Global Gender Gap

The Global Gender Gap Report 2016

America—have a remaining gender gap of less than 30%, at 25% and 28%, respectively. Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe and Central Asia are virtually tied at a remaining gender gap of exactly 30% each. They are followed by East Asia and the Pacific, with a remaining gender gap of 31.7%, Sub-Saharan Africa, with a gap of 32.1%, and South Asia, with a gap of 33%. The Middle East and North Africa region is yet to close a gender gap of just under 40%. The reader should note that population-weighted group averages are used throughout the Report.

Figure 4 (page 17) shows the range of country scores on the overall Index for each region. It reveals, for example, that, despite its high regional average, there is wide spread of outcomes among the 20 countries covered in the Western Europe region. A similarly wide spread of country performance also exists among the 30 countries covered in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Here, this diversity of outcomes is frequently driven by different performance on the Educational Attainment subindex. In other regions, the largest diversity of outcomes exists across the Economic Participation and Opportunity and Political Empowerment subindexes, while performance differences across the Educational Attainment and Health and Survival subindexes tend to be comparatively minor. A detailed discussion of regional and country-level results follows below.

East Asia and the Pacific

With an average remaining gender gap of just under 32%, the East Asia and the Pacific region scores in the middle of the range of the Global Gender Gap Index. With the Philippines and New Zealand, the region is home to two of the overall Index’s top ten performers, both having closed over 78% of their total gender gap—far ahead of the region’s next best-placed country—while the lower half of the region’s economies are yet to cross the threshold of having closed 70% of it or more. The region is also home to three of the five most-improved countries over the past decade on the Health and Survival gender gap, although out of the 16 countries in the region only four—Cambodia, Mongolia, Thailand and the Philippines—have fully closed that gap. With a regional average of 94%, East Asia and the Pacific is the lowest-ranked region globally on this subindex. Only two countries in the region have currently fully closed the Education Attainment gender gap, the Philippines being one of the two. Half of the countries in the region have closed the gender gap for professional and technical workers.

Out of the 16 countries covered by the Index in the region this year, five countries have increased their overall score compared to last year, while 10 have a decreased score. One new country joined the Index this year. The Philippines (7) and New Zealand (9) maintain their overall Index top ten rankings on the back of strong scores on closing the Political Empowerment gender gap and despite the Philippines’ small decline on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex. Lao PDR (43) becomes the third-ranked country in the region. This is due to Lao PDR’s progress in narrowing the gender gap in estimated earned income, tertiary enrolment and women parliamentarians, in addition to actually fully closing the gender gap in labour force participation—one of only five countries (and the only non-African one) to do so. Australia (46) is affected by the updated estimated earned income scale, highlighting the continued existence of a gender gap in income for Australia. The next-ranked country is Singapore (55), which, likewise, shows a wide gender gap in estimated earned income. However, this is balanced out by simultaneous progress in closing the gender gap for professional and technical workers and for secondary school enrolment. It is the country that has...
Figure 4: Global Gender Gap Index 2016, by region, income and political grouping

Source: Global Gender Gap Index 2016.
Note: Colored diamonds correspond to regional and income classification averages.
made the most progress in the region on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex over the past decade. Mongolia (58) experiences a small decrease in its overall score and ranking due to a widening in the gender gap on the Legislators, senior officials and managers indicator.

Vietnam (65) records a significant climb in ranking due to fully closing its tertiary education enrolment gender gap and an increase in women in parliament. By contrast, Thailand (71) slides in ranking due to a widening of its Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex gender gap and, in particular, a decrease in the number of female legislators, senior officials and managers. It also re-opens a gender gap in the literacy rate. Indonesia (88) balances a widening gender gap for female legislators, senior officials and managers against fully closing the one for professional and technical workers and increased wage equality to achieve a marginal increase in its overall score.

China (99) records a small decrease in wage equality and newly available data reveals that it continues to exhibit a gender gap in secondary school enrolment. It remains the world’s lowest-ranked country with regard to the gender gap in its sex ratio at birth. The Index’s updated estimated earned income scale highlights the continued existence of an income gender gap in Brunei Darussalam (103), leading to a decrease in ranking. However, other data updates for the country record some progress on closing the Political Empowerment subindex gender gap for the first time. Malaysia (106) records progress on closing gender gaps in women’s labour force participation and estimated earned income, and it fully closes the secondary school enrolment gap this year, leading to a rank and score increase. Cambodia (112) experiences a reversal in last year’s progress on closing its Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex gender gap, with a decline in women’s labour force participation and estimated earned income.

The Index’s updated estimated earned income scale highlights the continued existence of an income gender gap in Japan (111) and Korea, Rep. (116). However, this is not the only factor affecting the two countries’ performances this year. Japan records a significant widening of the gender gap for professional and technical workers, adversely affecting its ranking despite further progress in reducing the gender gap in tertiary education enrolment and women’s representation among legislators, senior officials and managers, and in improving wage equality for similar work. Korea, Rep., meanwhile, records a large improvement on its gender gap in professional and technical workers, and across the Political Empowerment subindex, almost completely offsetting a decrease in women’s share of estimated earned income and worsening perceptions of wage equality for similar work by the country’s business community.

Timor-Leste (125) re-enters the Global Gender Gap Index for the first time since 2012 and scores at the bottom of the East Asia and the Pacific region. The country has closed the gender gap in primary and secondary education and performs comparatively well on its share of female members of parliament. However, a significant gender gap remains on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex and in its sex ratio at birth.

### Eastern Europe and Central Asia

With an average remaining gender gap of 30%, the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region scores in the upper middle of the range of the Global Gender Gap Index, practically tied with the Latin America and Caribbean region. Slovenia, Latvia and Estonia, the top-ranked countries in the region, have closed 79%, 75% and 75% of their overall gender gaps, respectively, while the three lowest-ranked countries—Slovak Republic, Hungary and Armenia—have closed between 68% to 67% of their overall gender gap.

Out of the 26 countries in the region, one country—Latvia—has fully closed both its Educational Attainment and Health and Survival gender gaps, while another three countries have fully closed their Educational Attainment gender gaps and another five are on the verge of doing so. Two other countries from the region have fully closed their Health and Survival gender gap; however, three others—Azerbaijan, Albania and Armenia—are among the 10 lowest-performing countries in the entire Index on this subindex.

Out of the 26 countries from the region covered by the Index this year, 13 countries have increased their overall score compared to last year, while 12 have decreased their overall scores. One new country joined the Index this year.

Slovenia (8) is the region’s top performer and manages to defend its ranking in the global top ten for the second year running, having been one of the fastest-improving countries over the past decade. This year, progress has come particularly from an increase in wage equality for similar work. Similarly, the Baltic states—Latvia (18), Estonia (22) and Lithuania (25)—continue to make progress on closing their gender gaps, with improvements particularly in female representation in politics and among legislators, senior officials and managers. However, after a significant increase last year, Estonia records a reversal on the latter indicator as well as a slight decline in overall female labour force participation and estimated earned income, leading to a decrease on its Economic Participation and Opportunity score.

Moldova (26) maintains last year’s ranking and is followed by Belarus (30), which has made progress on closing its income gender gap this year. The country also maintains its strong performance on the number of female legislators, senior officials and managers as well as professional and technical workers, with more than 70% of the latter positions occupied by women. Poland (38) sees strong improvements in closing its income gender gap and improving wage equality and women parliamentarians, resulting in a significant increase in rank this year. Both
Bulgaria (41) and Serbia (48) have increased wage equality, however, Serbia also sees a widening gender gap for legislators, senior officials and managers. Kazakhstan (51) has widened its Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap, due to a slight decline in women’s labour force participation and estimated earned income. However, it has also increased women in parliament. Albania (62) climbs several ranks on the back of progress towards closing its gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment, making up for some of its slow progress on these dimensions over the past decade, while Croatia (68) continues to slide in rank, due to a significant decrease in its number of female members of parliament. Macedonia, FYR (73), meanwhile, records a decrease in female legislators, senior officials and managers, and also re-opens its Educational Attainment gender gap.

Ukraine (69) sees good progress in closing its gender gap for legislators, senior officials and managers; however, this is offset by decreases in women’s estimated earned income and overall labour force participation. Similarly, the Russian Federation (75) maintains its ranking despite small decreases in women’s estimated earned income and wage equality. It remains among the lowest-ranked countries in the region on the Political Empowerment subindex. Romania (76) has widened its gender gap across all dimensions of the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, while the Czech Republic (77) records small improvements across the same subindex. The Kyrgyz Republic (81), meanwhile, sees a large increase in its share of women legislators, senior officials and managers, but this progress is cancelled out by widening gender gaps in labour force participation, estimated earned income, and women parliamentarians, leading to a decrease in overall ranking.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (83) enters the Global Gender Gap Index for the first time, with closed primary, secondary and tertiary education gender gaps as well as scores above the Eastern Europe and Central Asia regional average on the Political Empowerment subindex. However, its gender gap in Economic Participation and Opportunity remains wide.

Azerbaijan (86) has achieved a significant improvement in its ranking due to a narrowing gender gap in earned income; wage equality; legislators, senior officials and managers; and women parliamentarians. However, it remains among the lowest-ranked countries in the world on the Health and Survival subindex. By contrast, rankings for both Montenegro (89) and Georgia (90) have slid due to a widening Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap.

The Eastern Europe and Central Asia regional table is completed by Tajikistan (93), Slovak Republic (94), Armenia (102) and Hungary (101)—all but the last of which see small improvements in their rankings this year. Notable improvements include a narrowing of the tertiary enrolment gender gap in Tajikistan and of the estimated earned income gender gap in Armenia. However, Armenia still records the second-lowest female-to-male sex ratio at birth in the world, just above China’s, while Hungary continues to be the region’s lowest-performing country with regard to closing the Political Empowerment gender gap.

Latin America and the Caribbean
With an average remaining gender gap of 30%, the Latin America and Caribbean region scores in the upper middle of the range of the Global Gender Gap Index, nearly tied with the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. The region is home to three of the top ten fastest-improving countries in the world since 2006: Nicaragua and Bolivia—which lead the regional rankings—and Ecuador, while the lowest-performing countries in the region are the Dominican Republic, Belize and Guatemala. Six countries in the region have fully closed both their Educational Attainment and Health and Survival gender gaps, the only region with this distinction.

Of the 25 countries covered by the Index in the region this year, 17 have improved their overall score compared to last year, while eight have regressed.

Nicaragua (10) regains its place in the global top ten and remains the best performer in the region for the fifth year in a row. It has fully closed its gender gap on Educational Attainment and Health and Survival, and is the highest ranking country in the region on Political Empowerment, with more than 50% of the gender gap now closed. Bolivia (23) records a slight decline in female labour force participation, but has reached parity in the number of women in parliament and has fully closed its Health and Survival gender gap. However, it is the second worst-performing country in the region on the Educational Attainment subindex. Costa Rica (32) continues to improve on Economic Participation and Opportunity. Its Educational Attainment gender gap has remained fully closed since 2011, and it ranks in the world’s top 20 for Political Empowerment, with more than 36% of its gender gap now closed. Cuba (27) continues to rank among the lowest countries in the region on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex. However, it has fully closed its gender gap in Educational Attainment.

Barbados (28) remains among the best-performing countries in the region and the world on closing the Economic Opportunity gender gap, achieving parity at the level of female legislators, senior officials and managers. It continues to take the top rank among the Caribbean nations, followed by the Bahamas (37) and Trinidad and Tobago (44), which share similar profiles. Jamaica (42) continues to improve on Political Empowerment, with an increased share of women in parliament.

Argentina’s (33) gender gap on Health and Survival remains fully closed and the country continues to rank among the region’s top performers on the Political Empowerment subindex. However, despite solid performance on education, the country does not leverage...
its female talent well, ranking 101st on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex. Colombia (39) improves on Economic Participation and Opportunity due to an increase in women’s labour force participation and estimated earned income, with parity at the level of legislators, senior officials and managers. Ecuador (40) continues to experience a reversal on its Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap, with setbacks across all categories except professional and technical workers, where it has reached parity. Its gender gap on Health and Survival remains fully closed.

Panama (47) and El Salvador (64) rank in the middle of the region, with, respectively, a slight increase and a slight decrease on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex. Both countries have achieved gender parity on the Health and Survival subindex. Mexico (66) sees a decrease in the female share of professional and technical workers and remains among the lowest-performing countries in the region on this indicator.

It maintains a stable performance across most other indicators. Chile (70) continues to make progress on Economic Participation and Opportunity due to increases in female labour force participation and the share of female professional and technical workers. However, it continues to rank among the region’s bottom three on this subindex. Continued improvement in the political participation of women is reflected in one more year of having a female head of state. Venezuela (74) records a decrease in women parliamentarians, while Peru (80) sees an increase. However, Peru remains the country with the widest health and survival gender gap in the region. Honduras (78) records improvements in women’s labour force participation and its gender gap on Educational Attainment remains fully closed. Brazil’s (79) improvements, due to a number of years with a female head of state, are counterbalanced by a larger labour force participation gender gap and the re-opening of its gender gap in Educational Attainment for the first time in five years. Uruguay (91) sees some progress on Educational Attainment but the gender gap remains open.

The bottom ranks of the region are made up of Suriname (95), Belize (98), Dominican Republic (97) and Paraguay (96), which overtakes Guatemala (105) due to improvements to its labour force participation gender gap and the number of female legislators, senior officials and managers. However, it remains the second-lowest performing country in the region on the Political Empowerment subindex.

Middle East and North Africa

For the first time, the Middle East and North Africa region has closed more than 60% of the overall gender gap. However, the region continues to rank last globally on the overall Index, behind South Asia. On Educational Attainment, it ranks ahead of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, and on Health and Survival it surpasses East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Still, no country from the region has fully closed its gender gap on either subindex, although Turkey—on Health and Survival—and the United Arab Emirates—on Educational Attainment—come close. In addition to Israel, with a remaining overall gender gap of 28%, the region’s best-performing countries this year are Qatar, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates, each having closed approximately 64% of their gender gap. The lower end of the regional table is made up of Syria and Yemen, having closed 57% and 52% of their gender gap, respectively. The Index’s revised estimated earned income scale reveals that in the region’s high-income countries, as elsewhere, additional efforts will still be required to fully close the gender gap in income. In addition, the Middle East and North Africa continues to lag on the Political Empowerment subindex, with only 9% of the gender gap closed and four out of the world’s five lowest-ranking countries on this subindex belonging to this region.

Out of the 18 countries covered by the Index in the region this year, 10 countries have improved their overall score compared to last year, while eight have regressed. Israel (49) remains the top performer in the region, recording improvements on perceptions of wage equality, female labour force participation and in the share of women in parliament. It is followed by Qatar (119), which records a narrowing in its labour participation gender gap this year. Algeria (120) climbs several ranks and sees progress on wage equality, estimated earned income, and labour force participation. It also fully closes its secondary education gender gap. The United Arab Emirates (124) sees improvement on women parliamentarians and wage equality, and comes very close to fully closing its gender gap on the Educational Attainment subindex. However, the Index’s updated estimated earned income scale highlights the continued existence of an income gender gap in the country. The next-ranked country is Tunisia (126), which scores above the regional average across all subindexes but sees a slight widening in the gender gap in literacy this year. It has shown the region’s strongest improvement on the Health and Survival subindex over the past decade. Kuwait (128) sees solid progress on women’s labour force participation. However, the Index’s updated estimated earned income scale reveals the full extent of the remaining income gender gap in the country, which is further accentuated by declining perceptions of wage equality among its business community, leading to a decline in ranking.

Elsewhere in the broader Middle East and North Africa region, Mauritania (129) has experienced an increase in women’s labour force participation and estimated earned income as well as a narrowing of its secondary and tertiary education gender gaps. Turkey (130), meanwhile, records progress on closing the gender gap in estimated earned income and for professional and technical workers. However, its gender gap widens for wage equality and
female members of parliament. Bahrain (131) sees a decline in its share of female professional and technical workers as well as a larger-than-before income gender gap due to the Index’s revised scale for calculating estimated earned income. On the positive side, it records an increase in female legislators, senior officials, and managers and it fully closes the secondary education enrolment gender gap, although this progress is not enough to halt a decrease in rank this year due to the collective impact of the above factors on the country’s Economic Participation and Opportunity score. Egypt (132) achieves a narrowing of the gender gap on a number of indicators this year, including wage equality, professional and technical workers, literacy, and women in parliament. It also fully closes its primary and secondary enrolment gender gaps, despite also seeing a stagnating female labour force participation rate and slight deterioration in women’s share of estimated earned income.

Next-ranked are Oman (133), Jordan (134), Lebanon (135) and Morocco (137), all of which report progress on narrowing their overall gender gaps this year, with increased wage equality across the business community in each of the four countries. However, Oman also re-opens its primary and secondary education enrolment gender gaps.

Iran, Islamic Rep. (139) has narrowed the gender gap for legislators, senior officials and managers as well as women parliamentarians, from a low base. It has also fully closed its gender gap in primary and secondary education. However, it regresses on wage equality, professional and technical workers as well as the tertiary enrolment gender gap.

Saudi Arabia (141) sees a widening gender gap across the entire Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, particularly with regard to the Index’s updated estimate of the scale of the gap in earned income. Saudi Arabia also re-opens its primary, secondary and tertiary education enrolment gender gap this year. More positively, it has recorded the region’s largest improvement on the overall Index over the past decade, as well as the second-largest improvement on Economic Participation and Opportunity globally. On Educational Attainment, it is the fifth-most improved country in the world.

The Middle East and North Africa regional ranking is completed by Syria (142) and Yemen (144), which both score in the global bottom three—nearly unchanged from last year—with a low-performing ranking on Economic Participation and Opportunity, in particular.

North America

With a remaining gender gap of 28%, North America is the region that has made the second-most progress towards gender parity overall. However, while both countries in the region have closed more than 70% of their overall gender gap, they have also seen their overall score decrease compared to last year. Further, neither has fully closed its gender gap on the Health and Survival subindex. The Index’s revised estimated earned income scale also reveals that both countries are still recording significant gender gaps in income.

Canada (35) takes the top spot in the region, despite recording a drop in female legislators, senior officials and managers. Nevertheless, improvements have been made on Political Empowerment, with more women in parliament. The changes to the cabinet are not yet reflected in globally comparable data sources although they would clearly boost Canada’s ranking. Its gender gap in Educational Attainment has remained fully closed since 2013.

The United States (45) sees a drop in its ranking due to a decrease on its Economic Participation and Opportunity score. This is partly due to a revised estimate of the size of the gender gap in estimated earned income; however, the country’s female labour force participation has also been stagnating for a number of years, including among legislators, senior officials and managers. More positively, the United States has reached gender parity in education, highlighting the large latent talent pool in the country’s adult female population.

South Asia

With an average remaining gender gap of 33%, the South Asia region is the second-lowest scoring on this year’s Global Gender Gap Index, ahead of the Middle East and North Africa and behind the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Bangladesh and India are the top-ranked countries in the region, having closed just under 70% and 68% of their overall gender gap, respectively, while the lowest-ranked countries are Bhutan and Pakistan, having closed 64% and 56% of their overall gender gap, respectively. No country in the region has fully closed its Educational Attainment gender gap, and only one country, Sri Lanka, has fully closed its Health and Survival gender gap. However, the region is also home to one of the top five climbers over the past decade on the overall Index and on Educational Attainment: Nepal.

Of the seven countries from the region included in the Index this year, two countries have increased their overall score compared to last year, while five have seen it decreasing.

Bangladesh (72) is the region’s top performer, recording progress this year on the Political Empowerment gender gap but a widening of the gap on women’s labour force participation and estimated earned income. It is followed by India (87), which reports progress this year on closing the gender gap with regard to wage equality and across all indicators of the Educational Attainment subindex, fully closing its primary and secondary education enrolment gender gaps. However, it also sees some regression on women’s estimated earned income and continues to rank third-lowest in the world on Health and Survival, remaining the world’s least-improved country on this subindex over the past decade. The next-ranked
Part 1: Measuring the Global Gender Gap


countries are Sri Lanka (100)—which has widened its Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap, particularly with regard to women's labour force participation, estimated earned income and wage equality, despite a small increase in female parliamentarians—and Nepal (110), which retains last year's ranking, with small improvements on the Political Empowerment subindex, as well as on literacy and wage equality.

The Maldives (115) re-opens its gender gap in primary education enrolment and shows a small increase in women's estimated earned income. Bhutan (121) sees a widening gender gap in female labour force participation, estimated earned income and wage equality, partly balanced out by an increase in the number of female professional and technical workers and a smaller gender gap in literacy. Its Heath and Survival and Political Empowerment scores remain the same as last year.

Pakistan (143) remains the region's lowest-ranked country and second-to-last ranked overall. It records progress on closing the secondary education enrolment gender gap, and on women's estimated earned income, but this is partly offset by reversals on wage equality and female-to-male literacy ratios.

Sub-Saharan Africa

With an average remaining gender gap of 32%, the Sub-Saharan Africa region scores in the lower middle range of the Global Gender Gap Index, ahead of South Asia and behind Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. It displays a wider range of gender gap outcomes than practically any other region: one top ten country, Rwanda; three countries, Burundi, Namibia and South Africa, that score in the top 20 and have closed 76% to 77% of their gender gaps; as well as many of the lowest-ranked countries in the Index, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Chad, who have not yet closed 60% of their overall gender gap. This high variance is explained by high diversity on the Educational Attainment subindex—much higher than for any other region—as well as uneven Health and Survival outcomes. Only one country from the region, Lesotho, has fully closed both its Educational Attainment and Health and Survival gender gaps. Botswana has fully closed its Educational Attainment gender gap and six others—Angola, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe—have fully closed their Health and Survival gender gaps.

Globally, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to rank last on the Educational Attainment subindex: Whereas 16 countries from the region have fully closed their gender gap for primary education, only 11 have closed it for secondary education and seven for tertiary education. Eight of the 10 lowest-ranked countries on the literacy rate indicator are from the region. On Health and Survival, the region has improved more than any other over the past decade. The region is characterized by high female labour force participation—with 11 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa in the global top 20 on this indicator and Mozambique, Malawi, Rwanda and Burundi demonstrating a higher representation of women in the labour force than men—translating into a high regional average on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex. Most of this participation however is low-skilled and the region must make higher investments in education.

Of the 30 countries from the region covered by the Index this year, 19 countries have increased their overall score compared to last year, while 11 have seen it decreasing.

Rwanda (5) continues to be the region's top performer, and the only country from the region ranked in the global top ten, marking progress this year in closing the gender gap on tertiary enrolment and estimated earned income while slipping on the more basic literacy rate gender gap. On the Political Empowerment subindex, Rwanda maintains its place in the global top ten as one of only two countries worldwide that have more women in parliament than men. Burundi (12) sees a big improvement in its score this year—breaking back into the top 20 with its highest-ever recorded ranking—due to progress in nearly closing its primary and secondary education enrolment gender gaps, albeit from a low base, as well

Source: Global Gender Gap Index 2016.
as to increases in wage equality. It is joined in the global Index top 20 by Namibia (14) and South Africa (15), both of which climb this year due to progress in closing their gender gaps in women’s labour force participation and estimated earned income, as well as to improvements on the Political Empowerment subindex. However, both countries record a decrease in wage equality.

Mozambique (21) improves several ranks and almost enters the top 20, with progress in women’s estimated earned income and wage equality, and a narrowing gender gap in secondary and tertiary education enrolment.

The next-ranked country in the region is Cape Verde (36), which likewise climbs several ranks and sees improvement in women in parliament, wage equality and estimated earned income, in particular. It is then followed by a cluster of countries that score in the middle range of the region—and of the Index overall: Tanzania (53), Botswana (54), Zimbabwe (56), Lesotho (57), Ghana (59), Madagascar (60), Uganda (61), Kenya (63) and Malawi (67). This year, widening and narrowing gender gaps in this field are concentrated on a few areas: women’s estimated earned income—decreasing in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Malawi but improving in Botswana—wage equality—improving in Botswana and Kenya but slipping in Ghana and Madagascar—and women’s share of legislators, senior officials, and managers as well as professional and technical workers, which have increased in Zimbabwe and Madagascar. Most countries in this group also record steady improvements on the Educational Attainment subindex.

The next regional cluster of countries includes a number of West African nations, including Senegal (82), Cameroon (85) and The Gambia (104). They are followed by Swaziland (107) and Ethiopia (109), which this year climbs several ranks on the back of progress in closing its gender gap in secondary and tertiary education enrolment. Next-ranked are Mauritius (113), Liberia (114) and Angola (117).

Nigeria (118) advances several ranks and manages to narrow its gender gaps in secondary education enrolment and wage equality. A further cluster of West African countries follows: Burkina Faso (123), Benin (127), Côte d’Ivoire (136) and Mali (138). The Sub-Saharan Africa region is completed by bottom-ranked Chad (140), which this year climbs two ranks on the back of progress towards closing its secondary education enrolment gap.

Western Europe

With an average remaining gender gap of 25%, Western Europe is the highest-performing region in the Index this year. However, it is also one of the regions with the widest performance variation, seeing progress stall or even reverse across a range of dimensions this year. Western Europe is home to four of the top five countries in the Index—Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden—demonstrating the continued progress of the Nordic countries in closing their overall gender gaps. At the bottom ranks of the region, three countries have a remaining gender gap of more than 30%: Cyprus, Greece and Malta. Finland and France are the only two countries in the region to have fully closed both their Educational Attainment and Health and Survival gender gaps.

Of the 20 countries in the region covered by the Index this year, only two have improved their overall score over last year, while 18 have seen it decrease.

Iceland (1), Finland (2), Norway (3) and Sweden (4) defend their top positions in the Index on the back of their world-leading positions on the Political Empowerment subindex and continued strong performance on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex. However, the Index’s revised estimated earned income scale reveals that in the Nordic countries, as elsewhere, additional efforts will be required to fully close the gender gap in income. Ireland (6) maintains its global top position, building on its strengths in political representation.

Switzerland (11) likewise continues to make progress on Political Empowerment, with more women in parliament, although its progress this year has not kept pace with that of the region’s other top performers on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, placing the country just outside the overall top ten.

Similar to other high-income countries in the region, the Index’s updated estimated earned income scale reveals that Germany (13) is yet to fully close its gender gap in income, leading to a slight decline on its Economic Participation and Opportunity score. Its gender gap in Educational Attainment remains open and the country ranks among the bottom two of the region in this category. Further improvements have been made on Political Empowerment and it now ranks in the global top ten on this subindex. France (17) improves on labour force participation and female professional and technical workers. It is one of two countries in the region to have fully closed its gender gap on the Educational Attainment and Health and Survival subindexes. The Netherlands (16) and Denmark (19) have seen their progress stall on women’s labour force participation and estimated earned income. Regarding Educational Attainment, the gender gap re-opens in the Netherlands while it remains fully closed in Denmark. The United Kingdom (20) completes this year’s global top 20, with an overall slight decline in female legislators, senior officials and managers as well as professional and technical workers.

Belgium (24), Luxembourg (34), Spain (29) and Portugal (31) rank in the middle of the Western Europe region, with a decline in women parliamentarians in the former and an increase in the latter. Austria (52) and Italy (50) see a drop in their share of female professional and technical workers, with less than 57% of that gap now closed in Italy. The Western Europe regional table is completed by Greece (92), Malta (108), and Cyprus (84), which this year sees solid improvements across
women’s labour force participation and its share of female legislators, senior officials and managers. While Cyprus has also improved its share of female members of parliament, the country remains the lowest-performing in the region on this indicator, with just over 10% of its gender gap now closed.

Progress over time
With the economic and business case for gender parity becoming ever clearer, there is an urgent need for reliable metrics to capture the progress achieved over time. Since 2006, the Global Gender Gap Report has served as just such a global benchmark for tracking progress in closing gender gaps. Each year, the rate of change helps predict the projected time to closing the divide between women and men’s parity in employment, education, health and politics.

All things held equal, with current trends, the overall global gender gap can be closed in 83 years across the 107 countries covered since the inception of the Report—just within the statistical lifetime of baby girls born today. However, the most challenging gender gaps remain in the economic sphere and in health. At the current rate of change, and given the widening economic gender gap since last year, it will not be closed for another 170 years. The economic gender gap this year has reverted back to where it stood in 2008, after a peak in 2013. On the other hand, on current trends, the education–specific gender gap could be reduced to parity within the next 10 years. The currently widest gender gap, in the political dimension, is also the one exhibiting the most progress, narrowing by 9% since 2006. On current trends, it could be closed within 82 years. The time to close the health gender gap remains undefined. Formally the smallest gap, it has oscillated in size with a general downward trend. Today, the gap is larger than it stood in 2008, after a peak in 2013. On the other hand, on current trends, the education-specific gender gap could be reduced to parity within the next 10 years.

Gender gaps and income
Table 6 (page 25) displays country rankings by income group (Table A2 in Appendix A details the income group categories used). In 2016, the best-performing high-income group countries are once again the Nordics—Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden—which are also the overall leaders of the Index, while Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia are the lowest-performing countries in this income group. Among the upper-middle income group, Namibia, South Africa and Cuba lead the way, whereas Jordan, Lebanon and Iran, Islamic Rep. are the bottom performers. In the lower-middle income group, the Philippines, Nicaragua and Bolivia take the top spots while the lower end of the group is made up of Syria, Pakistan and Yemen. Finally, the low-income group—consisting mostly of Sub-Saharan African economies—is dominated by Rwanda, Burundi and Mozambique, with Benin, Mali and Chad comprising the lower ranks.

The bottom part of Figure 4 (page 17) shows the range of scores for the overall Global Gender Gap Index by income group. Population-weighted group averages are indicated by a blue diamond. High-income countries have the highest average score (72%), followed by low-income countries (68%), upper-middle income countries (68%) and, finally, lower-middle income countries (67%). However, as revealed in Figure 4, there is a wide variety of gender gap outcomes across every income group.

In 2016, out of the 49 countries in the high-income group covered by the Index, four have closed more than 80% of their overall gender gap, 28 have closed between 70% and 80% of their gender gap, 16 have closed between 60% and 70%, and one country is yet to cross the 60% threshold. Among the 41 countries in the upper-middle income group, 16 have closed between 70% and 80% of their gender gap, 23 have closed between 60% and 70%, with two countries having closed less than 60%. In the lower-middle income group, out of 36 countries, 13 have closed between 70% and 80% of their gender gap, 18 have closed between 60% and 70%, and five countries have not yet reached 60%. Finally, among the low-income group, out of 18 countries, one has crossed the 80% threshold, seven have closed between 70% and 80% of their gender gap, eight have closed between 60% and 70%, and two countries are yet to close 60% of their gender gap or more.

While the above does suggest a relationship between gender parity and gross national income—with a growing body of research and evidence strongly suggesting that gender parity can become a key driver of prosperity and national income growth (see Figure 6 on page 26)—the Index finds little evidence that a high GNI is in any way a prerequisite to making progress on gender parity.