

SPOTLIGHT ON GOAL 11

HARSH REALITIES: MARGINALIZED WOMEN IN CITIES OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD

'Harsh Realities: Marginalized Women in Cities of the Developing World' was written by Ginette Azcona, Antra Bhatt and Sara Duerto Valero at UN Women and Tanu Priya Uteng at the Institute of Transport Economics in Norway. The authors would like to acknowledge the valuable comments of Donatien Beguy, Sylvia Chant, Guillem Fortuny Fillo, Joshua Maviti, Cathy McIlwaine, Dennis Mwaniki, Robert Ndugwa, Shahra Razavi and Kerstin Sommer; they are also grateful for the excellent research assistance provided by Gabrielle Leite and Julia Brauchle.

This study is dedicated to Sylvia Chant, professor of development geography at the London School of Economics (24 December 1958 – 18 December 2019). Professor Chant was a world-renowned feminist geographer who helped shape the field of gender and international development. Despite her illness, she made time to review the manuscript in detail, and will be remembered for her compassion, intellectual rigour and fierce dedication to promoting the well-being of women everywhere.

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SUMMARY

Today, more than half the world's population (55 per cent) live in urban areas, a share projected to reach 68 per cent by 2050.¹ The rate and scale of urban growth presents daunting challenges, including the need for investments in transportation, housing, sanitation, energy, and social and physical infrastructure. Where these investments are lacking, a greater number of individuals will be forced to live in areas that lack durable and secure housing, and that are cut off from essential services, such as clean water and sanitation. Globally, the number of people living in slums – neglected parts of cities characterized by poverty and substandard living conditions – is growing. The latest estimates put the number of slum dwellers worldwide at over 1 billion people – one sixth of humanity.²

Women face multiple forms of discrimination in their everyday lives; they have an increased risk of poverty and limited negotiating power and access to resources. They also endure the greatest hardships resulting from the proliferation of underresourced and often spatially segregated urban areas. Despite the wide-ranging implications of this phenomenon, gender profiles of urban slum residents are scarce, with a limited focus on the deprivations faced by women in slum and slum-like settings.³ In signing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders pledged to eliminate poverty, reach those furthest behind, and achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5). They also promised to address the need for adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services among slum dwellers and those living in informal settlements (Goal 11).

A global indicator framework has been developed to monitor the 2030 Agenda and track implementation of its 17 Goals and targets. This framework, while highly ambitious, still fails to address the gender dimensions of informal settlements in an integrated manner. The analysis on the following pages discusses this gap and argues for an integrated approach. It presents new insights into the sex

composition of slums and the adverse outcomes experienced by women in these settings.

This analysis, based on data from 59 low- and middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Southern Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, finds that women and their families bear the brunt of growing income inequality and failures to adequately plan for and respond to rapid urbanization. The data show that in 80 per cent of countries analysed, women are overrepresented in urban slums among those aged 15 to 49.⁴ At the root of this phenomenon are gender-based inequalities that limit women's access to education, rights to housing and asset ownership. Gender inequalities also make it more difficult for women to engage in paid work, largely because they bear greater responsibility than men for unpaid care and domestic work.

BACKGROUND

Most of the world's people now live in cities and towns, with urbanization proceeding at a stunning pace. By 2030, one in every three people will live in a city with at least 500,000 inhabitants.^{5,6} For women and girls, moving from a remote rural setting to an urban area can be a source of liberation, particularly in the context of rigid gender norms. However, this positive transformation, which can include greater autonomy and empowerment, requires that women and girls have equal rights to the benefits and opportunities that cities offer. For many women who reside in slums, the reality of urban living is characterized by deep poverty and inequalities in access to services such as health and education and to decent work. They often experience restricted mobility, threats to their security and personal safety, and exclusion from decision-making,⁷ all of which are compounded by the lack of secure tenure.

Data from 61 low- and middle-income countries show that, across a diverse set of outcomes, women living in urban settings do better on average than women in rural areas. The median years of education among female urban residents, for

example, are greater than those of their rural counterparts.⁸ The demand for family planning satisfied with modern contraceptives tends to be higher in urban than in rural areas; and when asked if they have a say in decision-making at home, urban women generally are more likely to say they do.⁹ In the aggregate, city life offers a new world of opportunities, but the benefits are often skewed in their distribution, with slum dwellers remaining furthest behind. The following pages examine the deleterious effects of multidimensional poverty in urban areas. They also look at the extent to which deprivations in basic living conditions are ‘gendered’, with urban women facing greater exposure to life in slum-like conditions than urban men.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Information on the sex composition of household members living in slum housing conditions is available. However, it has not, until now, been used to create gender profiles of urban residents living in these conditions. In this study, data from the most recent Demographic and Health Surveys, from 2007 or later, are used to address this analytical gap and provide new insights into the gender¹⁰ profiles of some of the world’s largest slums (see Box 1). Differences in the well-being of slum and non-slum residents are also explored through selected measures, including access to education and decent work.

BOX 1

SLUM HOUSEHOLD CLASSIFICATION: DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 11.1.1 classifies ‘slum households’ as households that meet at least one of the following five criteria: (1) lack of access to improved water source, (2) lack of access to improved sanitation facilities, (3) lack of sufficient living area,¹¹ (4) lack of housing durability and (5) lack of security of tenure. These criteria utilize the international definition of slum households as agreed by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Statistics Division and the Cities Alliance. In practice, however, the methodology and questions proposed for measuring land tenure security (criterion 5) are not in place. Thus, slum status is assessed using the first four criteria only.

A prominent characteristic of urban poverty in developing countries is lack of durable housing and secure tenure. Among the urban poor, women, ethnic minorities, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, the right to housing is often tenuous and the fear of eviction ever present. Lack of tenure data, however, means that it is often excluded from slum determination, including in this study. Accordingly, the term ‘slum dwellers’ used here refers to individuals who are living in slum-like conditions – that is, who meet at least one of four available criteria. For readability, however, the terms ‘slum’ and ‘slum-like’ are used interchangeably.

This study uses household-level data from 59 developing countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Southern Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa to create gender profiles of slum residents and to assess whether women are overrepresented among slum dwellers: are they a greater share of the slum population? How do sex ratios in slum settings compare to sex ratios in urban non-slum settings, and in rural areas? The main data source, the Demographic and Health Survey, focuses primarily on the well-being outcomes of women and girls of reproductive age. Individual-level measures of well-being for those aged 50 and older, in particular, are not collected. Due to this data restriction, the gendered analysis of living conditions in slum settings is limited to women and girls and men and boys aged 15 to 49. Therefore, while sex ratios and well-being outcomes among the urban poor living in slum-like conditions aged 0-14 and 50+ are highly relevant and important, they are beyond the scope of this study.

WOMEN ARE BECOMING A GROWING SHARE OF THE URBAN POPULATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Globally, urban sex ratios favour men. That is, for every 100 men in the world's cities, there are about 96 women.¹² Key contributors to this broad trend include gender-differentiated rural-urban migration patterns resulting from discriminatory social norms and expectations, power imbalances and gender inequality, which hinder women's ability to move freely. That said, the demographic reality of the urban landscape is changing rapidly and already varies widely by age and region.¹³ For example, among children and individuals aged 15 to 49, men outnumber women in urban areas.¹⁴ However, among individuals aged 50 or older, urban sex ratios skew heavily female: For every 100 men aged 50+ and 60+, there are 113 and 122 women, respectively.

When disaggregated by geographic region, urban sex ratios present a diverse picture, especially for those aged 15 to 49. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a highly urbanized region, urban sex ratios have favoured women since the 1980s. In El Salvador and Guatemala, for example, 15 and 12 more women per 100 men aged 15 to 49 live in urban areas, respectively. Recent trends also point to greater feminization of urban sex ratios in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁵ In Lesotho, for instance, 13 more women per 100 men live in urban areas.

The demographic reality of the urban landscape is changing rapidly and already varies widely by age and region.

In other regions, sex ratios among urban individuals aged 15 to 49 are more balanced: In Central Asia, Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Asia, there are 3 more women per 100 men, and in Australia, New Zealand and Northern Africa, the numbers are

equal. In contrast, in Eastern and Southern Asia, a significantly greater number of men than women in this age group live in urban areas. This is a trend driven by the world's two most populated countries – China and India – where overall and urban sex ratios remain heavily biased towards men, with 92 and 88 women for every 100 men aged 15 to 49 in urban areas, respectively.¹⁶ The urban sex ratios in all these countries and regions, however, are expected to become increasingly skewed as more urban women outlive men and female rural-to-urban migration increases.

OPPORTUNITY AND ESCAPE FROM PATRIARCHAL NORMS ARE DRIVERS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

The forces driving working-age rural women to urban areas vary. They range from economic factors – such as rural women's disadvantage in land ownership and inheritance as well as the growing demand for female labour in the urban manufacturing sector – to the social. These include women's attempts to escape cultural, normative and physical restrictions often aggravated by strong kinship relations in rural areas.¹⁷

Studies show, for example, that women migrate to larger cities within their own countries to avoid early and forced marriage and other forms of violence against women in the family, including, in extreme cases, the threat of femicide.¹⁸ For others, the lack of viable income-generating activities in rural areas is the driving force in the decision to migrate to urban centres, often for jobs in private households as domestic workers and caregivers.¹⁹ In Cambodia, the increasing demand for women over men labourers in the garment industry has prompted greater numbers of rural women to migrate to urban areas.²⁰ Other factors are also at play. For example, in the United Republic of Tanzania, HIV-positive women report better access to medical treatment and reduced stigma as motivating factors for the move

to cities and towns.²¹ The decline in land productivity, resulting from extreme weather shocks, premature male death and desertion,²² and the need to diversify and spread risk, are other drivers of rural-urban migration.

IN MANY COUNTRIES, WOMEN ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN URBAN SLUMS

Every week, 3 million people around the world move from rural to urban areas, often in search of greater opportunities and a higher standard of living. Social and physical barriers, however, often confine these new urban dwellers to a life of poverty, with substandard housing conditions, inadequate access to public services and insecure property rights. This is especially the case for women.²³

Data from 59 developing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Southern Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa show that sex ratios in slums among those aged 15 to 49 tend to favour women (see Figure 1). In fact, women are overrepresented in slums in 80 per cent of 59 developing countries where data are available. In Kenya, home to the world's fourth largest slum²⁴ (when measured by population size), there are 116 women for every 100 men living in slum conditions. The figure is 120 (or more) women aged 15 to 49 for every 100 men in the same age group in other countries, including Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti and Lesotho. In 61 per cent of the 59 developing countries analysed, more than half of the female urban population in that age group live in slums; the share is 56 per cent for men.

Social and physical barriers often confine new urban dwellers, especially women, to a life of poverty, with substandard housing conditions, inadequate access to public services and insecure property rights.

Four broad gender profile patterns emerge from the available data. However, further research is needed to understand the economic, social, demographic and cultural factors that drive them. The first set of countries (Group 1 in Figure 1) are those for which sex ratios in slum settings favour women, particularly in comparison to sex ratios in rural areas and/or non-slum urban settings. In South Africa, for example, urban sex ratios are balanced overall, but slum and slum-like areas skew heavily female (119 women for every 100 men). This means that while women and men are equally likely to live in urban areas, more women live in sections of the city that are characterized by extreme poverty and lack of basic services. Similarly, in Ghana, gender parity is observed among urban residents in non-slum settings. A starkly different picture, however, emerges among slum dwellers, where there are almost 30 more women aged 15 to 49 for every 100 men in that age group.

The second group of countries (Group 2 in Figure 1) are examples of contexts where urban sex ratios skew female, but where women are not overrepresented in slums (that is, the urban slum sex ratio is the same or below the overall urban sex ratio). The dynamics at play here are likely country-specific. But higher demand for women (compared to men) in manufacturing jobs and as domestic workers and declining job prospects for men could be a driving factor. In Bangladesh, for example, the garment industry relies heavily on young unmarried women from rural areas to meet their demand for cheap labour. In other cases, the work generally performed by women dictates special living arrangements. For example, women who migrate to the city for jobs as live-in domestic workers, residing most of the week with their employer, are not necessarily counted as residents in slum households.²⁵ In some contexts, women may also benefit from low-income urban housing schemes whose target beneficiaries are single mothers and other women living in poor communities. These include the Global Housing Programme in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia/Namibia Housing Action Group project in Namibia, both of which have been recognized as best practices by UN-Habitat.²⁶

Women living in slums are being left behind across a range of well-being outcomes, from access to education and health services to opportunities for paid work.

In the third group (Group 3 in Figure 1) are countries where migration to urban areas appears to occur predominantly among males, with significantly more women than men remaining in rural areas. In Guinea, for example, there are 29 more women per 100 men aged 15 to 49 in rural areas. In comparison, urban sex ratios in that country show 106 women for every 100 men. In a number of these countries, when women do move to urban areas, they appear more likely than their male counterparts to live in slum-like settings, struggling to survive, often in informal shelters with little to no access to basic services. In Sierra Leone, urban women and men are equally likely to live in non-slum areas, but women are overrepresented in slum settings: 120 women aged 15 to 49 for every 100 men in the same age group.

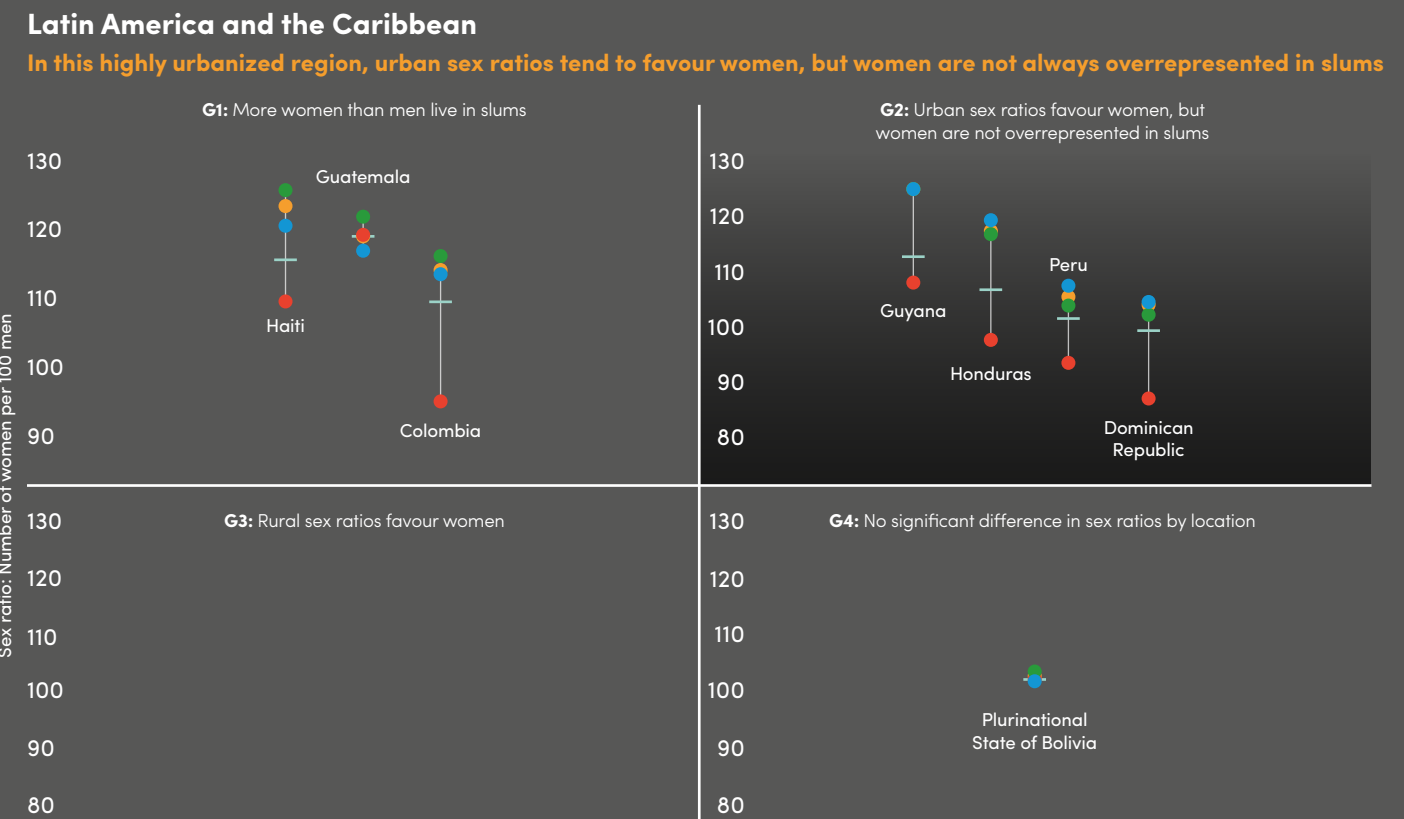
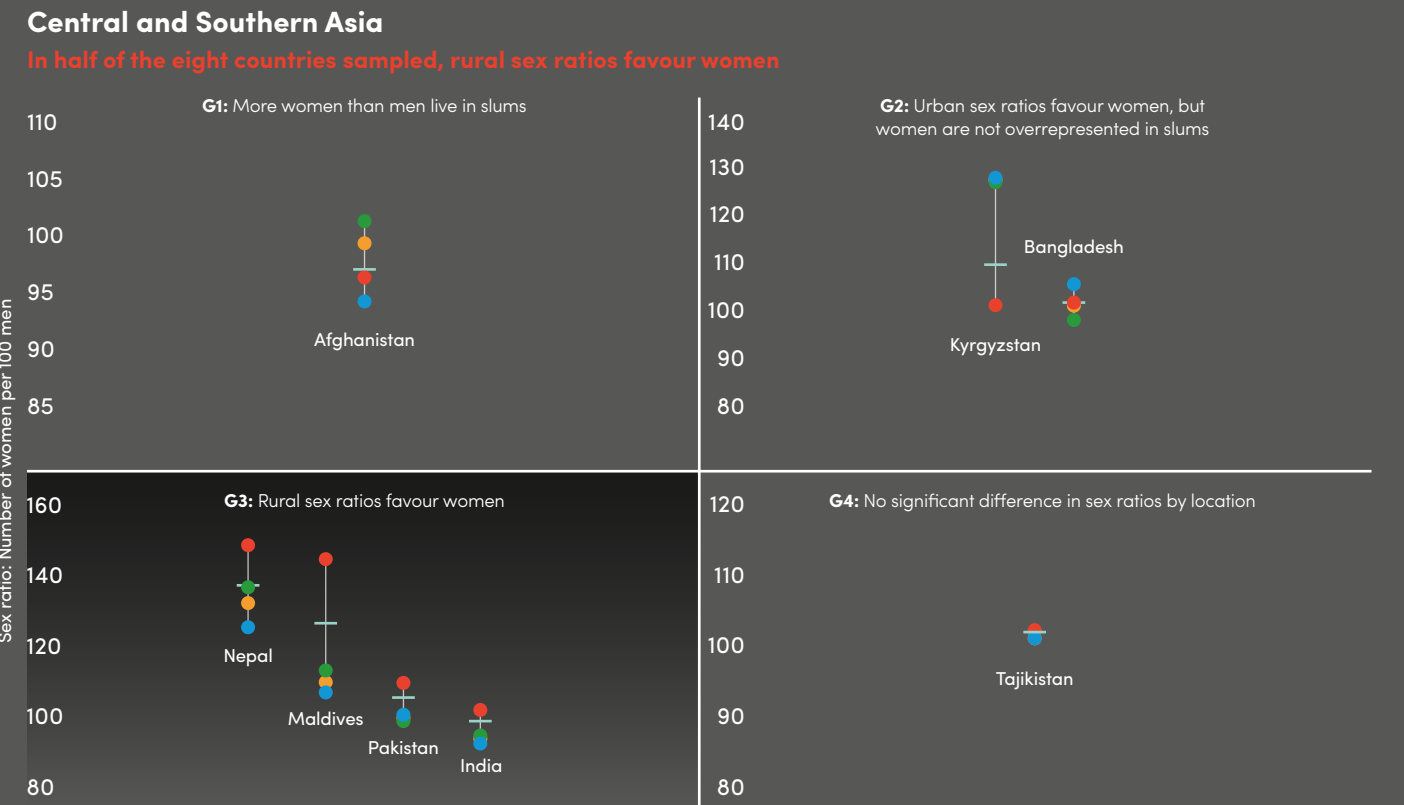
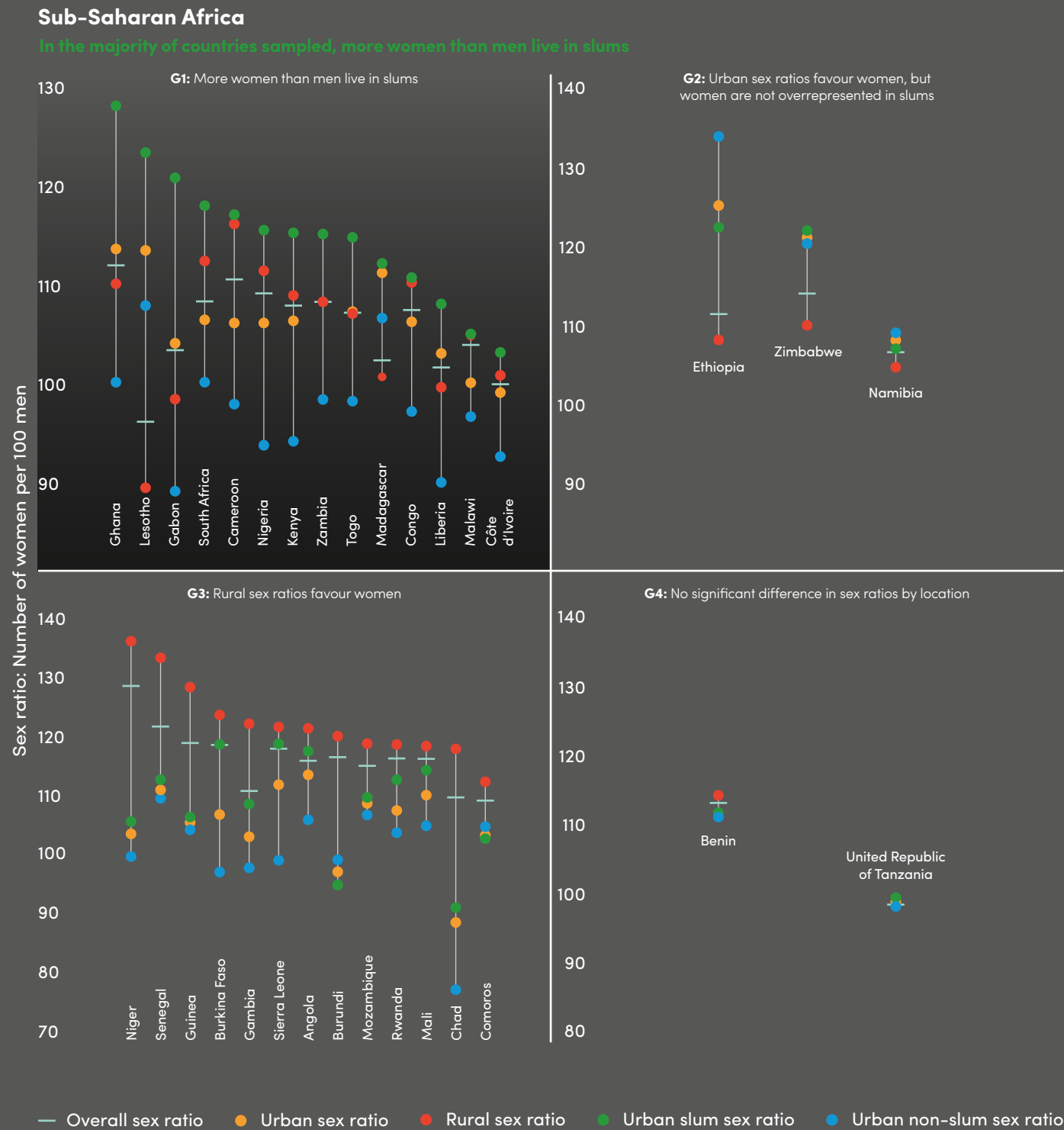
Finally, for a small group of countries identified as Group 4 in Figure 1, no differences in sex ratios are

observed across any setting – urban/rural and slum/non-slum.

As the evidence shows, cities in developing regions are becoming increasingly feminized. And urban poverty, characterized by informal settlements and inadequate access to shelter and services, is also increasingly affecting women and girls. Researchers in this field point to gender-specific injustices that women in urban and slum settings face, including disparities in power, rights and assets, in divisions of labour, and in spatial mobility and connectivity; typically, they also lack easy access to sexual and reproductive health care.²⁷ Chant and McIlwaine (2016) refer to this multidimensional concept of gender inequality in urban settings as the 'gender-urban interface'. They and others call for 'engendering' urban analysis as a critical first step in addressing women's equal rights in urban areas. Key dimensions of this approach are elaborated further in the following section, which looks simultaneously at gender and spatial disparities in critical areas of well-being. The analysis shows that women living in slums and slum-like settings are being left behind across a range of well-being outcomes, from access to education and health services to opportunities for paid work.

FIGURE 1 SEX RATIOS FOR INDIVIDUALS AGED 15-49 BY LOCATION, 2007 OR LATER

In 80 per cent of countries sampled, women are overrepresented in urban slums where they lack at least one of the following: access to clean water, durable housing, improved sanitation facilities and sufficient living area.



Source: UN Women calculations based on microdata from Demographic and Health Surveys for the years of 2007-2017 for 59 developing countries. Only regions with substantial country coverage (eight or more countries) are shown. Data for Armenia, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen (Northern Africa and Western Asia), Albania, Ukraine (Europe and Northern America) and Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Timor-Leste (Eastern and South-Eastern Asia) are available on request. Group 3 includes countries where rural sex ratios favour women; in the case of Chad only, rural sex ratios favour women and urban sex ratios favour men.

Notes: SDG indicator 11.1.1 classifies 'slum households' as households that meet at least one of the following five criteria: (1) lack of access to improved water source, (2) lack of access to improved sanitation facilities, (3) lack of sufficient living area, (4) lack of housing durability and (5) lack of security of tenure. These criteria utilize the international definition of 'slum households' as agreed by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Statistics Division and the Cities Alliance. However, in practice, the methodology for measuring security of tenure is not in place; thus, slum status is assessed using the first four criteria only.

WOMEN LIVING IN SLUMS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY A RANGE OF DEPRIVATIONS

Access to essential services and social infrastructure, along with tenure security, education and employment opportunities, can help women pull themselves and their families out of poverty. Yet these safeguards are not available to many female slum dwellers, especially those living in informal settlements or on the periphery of urban centres. This study's findings confirm that women in slums are worse off than their male slum and female non-slum counterparts across a broad range of outcomes.

Lack of tenure security and durable housing is a prominent characteristic of slum settings. Forced eviction and relocation from land and home disproportionately affect women.²⁸ In turn, women – whose mobility is often constrained by social norms and affordability issues – are most affected by poor housing conditions.²⁹ The few cross-country studies available provide important insights about the gendered nature of tenure security. Research in Benin, Kenya, Peru, Thailand, Rwanda and Uganda shows that over 6 per cent more women than men in urban settings are likely to lack security of tenure.³⁰

This study's findings confirm that women in slums are worse off than their male slum and female non-slum counterparts.

One result of the lack of secure and durable housing is increased exposure of women to violence. A study of slum dwellers in Delhi found that communities that lack durable housing have high rates of gender-based violence due to poor sanitation facilities, unsafe approach roads and the absence of police. Similar findings on women's exposure to gender-based violence resulting from lack of improved

sanitation, durable housing and secure tenure have also been reported in Nairobi.³¹

Inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities expose women and girls to violence as well as health hazards, such as gastrointestinal illnesses and respiratory and skin infections.³² The lack of water and sanitation also affects their ability to practise adequate menstrual hygiene, a lesser explored implication that is central to guaranteeing the well-being and equal participation of women and girls.³³ According to a cross-national study covering 18 low- and middle-income countries, the percentage of women who lack handwashing facilities with soap and water on premises – two critical components of managing menstrual hygiene – is below 30 per cent in Honduras, Tajikistan and Tunisia, and above 80 per cent in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria and Uganda.³⁴ The findings from our study also show that, on average, 118 (or more) women per 100 men aged 15 to 49 live in slums in Ghana, Gabon, Burkina Faso and Cameroon, where a large percentage of urban residents live without access to basic sanitation: the proportions are 82, 62, 58 and 53 per cent, respectively.

Women are often responsible for a large share of the household's unpaid care and domestic work, leaving them little time for paid employment, rest and leisure. In Malawi, women without safe drinking water in their households spend an average of 54 minutes a day collecting water, while men spend 6 minutes.³⁵ The absence of safely managed drinking water services may also mean that women cook with unimproved water sources. This could negatively affect the health of household members, further adding to women's care responsibilities.³⁶

An education analysis for selected sub-Saharan African countries in our sample³⁷ shows that women living in slum conditions face worse educational outcomes than their non-slum counterparts and, in most cases, than men living in slum conditions. In Nigeria, only about 9 per cent of women in slum

settings had completed more than a secondary education in comparison to 15 per cent of male slum dwellers and 29 per cent of women living in non-slum urban areas.

Evidence also indicates that lack of access to essential infrastructure restricts women in slums from participating in income-generating activities or aggravates the resulting 'time poverty'. An ethnographic study of low-income communities in self-built stilt housing over lagoons in Guayaquil, Ecuador, for example, highlights how the lack of water connections represents a critical constraint in women's economic opportunities in undertaking laundry work, a common home-based productive activity for low-income women in the city.³⁸

Despite these limitations, most women in slums engage in remunerative work that tends to be low-paid, temporary, strenuous and exploitative, increasing their likelihood of becoming part of the 'working poor' (employed but earning less than \$1.90 a day). An analysis of selected countries in our sample³⁹ confirms that employment rates for slum-dwelling women are significantly lower than their non-slum counterparts and that, when employed, women in slums are less likely to earn a cash income. In Burkina Faso, only 57 per cent of slum-dwelling women were employed all year long in comparison to 72 per cent of non-slum women. Among those employed, around two thirds of women in slums earned a cash income (66 per cent) versus 77 per cent of women not living in slums.

Research indicates that the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health facilities in the vicinity or easily accessible via public transport may result in greater likelihood of dropping out of school, early marriage, pregnancy and an unmet need for family planning. Lack of such services within easy reach may also increase the risk of not receiving antenatal care and skilled attendance at birth.⁴⁰ The analysis in this study confirms gaps in access to basic services experienced by female slum dwellers. In Liberia, for example, 28 per cent of women living in slums report difficulty

in accessing health services because they are difficult to reach, versus 17 per cent of non-slum-dwelling women.

In some contexts, efforts to improve the living conditions of slum dwellers have resulted in forced relocations to the urban periphery – further limiting access. The most immediate result of these resettlement programmes has been the loss of livelihoods for poor urban women, whose income sources were originally anchored within walking distance of slum communities. Research in Kolkata, India, for example, shows that slum dwellers tend to limit their travel distance in order to optimize their travel expenditure.⁴¹ It was further observed that with improved accessibility, the per capita income of slum dwellers tends to increase due to better access to work opportunities.⁴²

MAKING THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN IN SLUMS VISIBLE REQUIRES A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable data disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location, income, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts to measure progress and ensure that no one is left behind.⁴³

However, the global indicator framework for the SDGs – while impressive in its scope – lacks a multidimensional approach to measuring progress, or lack thereof. For example, SDG indicator 1.1.1 calls for the disaggregation of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status and geographic location, but not by the intersection of these dimensions. The absence of a multidimensional approach risks making population groups furthest behind invisible in aggregate statistics, limiting understanding of

intersectional dynamics, including that of gender and geographic location, and their relation to well-being distribution in society. In the case of SDG indicator 1.1.1, disaggregation by sex alone is insufficient since it is not just gender, but its intersection with other forms of discrimination, that pushes women and girls from poor and marginalized groups behind.⁴⁴

Indeed, evidence has shown that when multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination converge, women and girls tend to fare worse across various well-being outcomes.⁴⁵ A woman who is married too young, burdened too early with care responsibilities, deprived of education and access to a livelihood faces the risk of many other forms of deprivation that will compromise her opportunities in life.⁴⁶ These deprivations are likely to be more acute if she belongs to a poor or marginalized group.

Disaggregation by geographic location, a strong correlate to poverty and deprivation, remains restricted to the binary rural-urban classification in the global indicator framework for the SDGs, omitting slums and slum-like settings. The focus on slum dwellers only becomes evident in target 11.1, which seeks to upgrade slums. Yet the five components of SDG indicator 11.1.1, most of which represent an integral part of censuses and surveys, are collected at the household-level and thus do not lend themselves easily to individual-level analysis.⁴⁷

Data disaggregation by geographic location, a strong correlate to poverty and deprivation, remains restricted to the binary rural-urban classification.

The challenge of measuring security of tenure due to its intricate linkages with access to land and property also deserves special attention. Progress has been made in integrating this component into the computation of SDG indicator 11.1.1.⁴⁸ However, the development and implementation of a methodology and questions to measure legal or perceived urban land tenure security disaggregated by sex, as captured in SDG indicator 1.4.2, remains limited.⁴⁹

For many of the world's rural poor, the move from rural to urban settings is regarded as an opportunity for a better life, particularly with respect to gains in access to higher paid work, education and proximity to essential services. But often these gains are unequally distributed, and the resulting social and physical barriers confine these new urban dwellers to a life of poverty. Gender equality is crucial for sustainable urbanization, but as highlighted through the evidence presented in this study, women are particularly disadvantaged. Tailored interventions and policymaking at large require greater understanding of the gender profiles of slum settlements, which are increasingly feminized.

THE ROAD AHEAD: POLICY PRIORITIES

1/ Make female slum dwellers visible from a statistical standpoint. This is a first step in ensuring that their realities are brought to the fore and considered in the formulation of strategies for achieving gender equality and sustainable urbanization. Targeted interventions and policymaking at large require greater availability and understanding of the gender profiles of slum settlements, which are increasingly inhabited by women and girls.

This calls for strengthening national capacity to generate, analyse and disseminate data on SDG indicator 11.1.1, and to incorporate intra-urban disaggregation in individual, gender-specific outcome indicators, moving beyond the binary rural-urban classification. There is also a need to improve and adopt methodologies that produce urban land tenure security estimates disaggregated by sex.

2/ Increase the provision of durable and adequate housing and equitable access to land. Women in urban settings face steep barriers in exercising their housing rights. Addressing discrimination embedded in marriage and inheritance laws is key to expanding women's possession of assets, including land and housing. Better regulation of housing prices/rents and provision of social housing are also needed. Additionally, the lack of legal protections for women's housing rights must be addressed. This is crucial, especially since land and property in towns and cities are accessed more through the market than inheritance.⁵⁰

3/ Ensure that women are included in urban planning and development processes. Where cities are designed 'by men and for men',⁵¹ women face multiple disadvantages, such as greater risk of being left out of compensation-based housing and other residential provisions. Legal protections for women's housing rights based on non-discrimination and equality are essential. Gender-sensitive empowerment mechanisms need to be woven into urban programmes to provide a space

for community engagement in planning processes and to promote meaningful participation in decision-making for women.

4/ Address violence against women in all its forms. Intimate partner violence is linked to housing insecurity. Housing insecurity increases women's vulnerability to violence by limiting their ability to escape to a safe space. In addition, non-intimate-partner violence, which contributes to high rates of gender-based violence in cities, also increases when women are living in informal settlements that lack adequate sanitation facilities, water sources, and safe and affordable transport facilities.⁵²

5/ Provide access to social infrastructure, including affordable childcare facilities. Having children in the household greatly reduces women's chances of being employed. Gainful employment takes place either by working closer to home or by running a household microenterprise. Provision of affordable childcare facilities can enhance employment opportunities for women.

6/ Provide access to physical infrastructure, including affordable, safe and reliable public transport and sidewalks and other walkways. If public transportation systems are designed to meet women's commuting patterns and transportation needs, their use will rise sharply, with potential multiplier effects on women's physical access to work and skills-building opportunities.

7/ Invest in gender-aware, inclusive and evidence-based policymaking. In designing policies to lift up the urban poor, all stakeholders, including slum dwellers (a large share of whom are women) must be consulted so that resettlement mechanisms are designed for the long-term and reflect the expressed needs of residents. Policy design must also be grounded in evidence based on available gender data, research and evaluation of previous slum resettlement programmes.

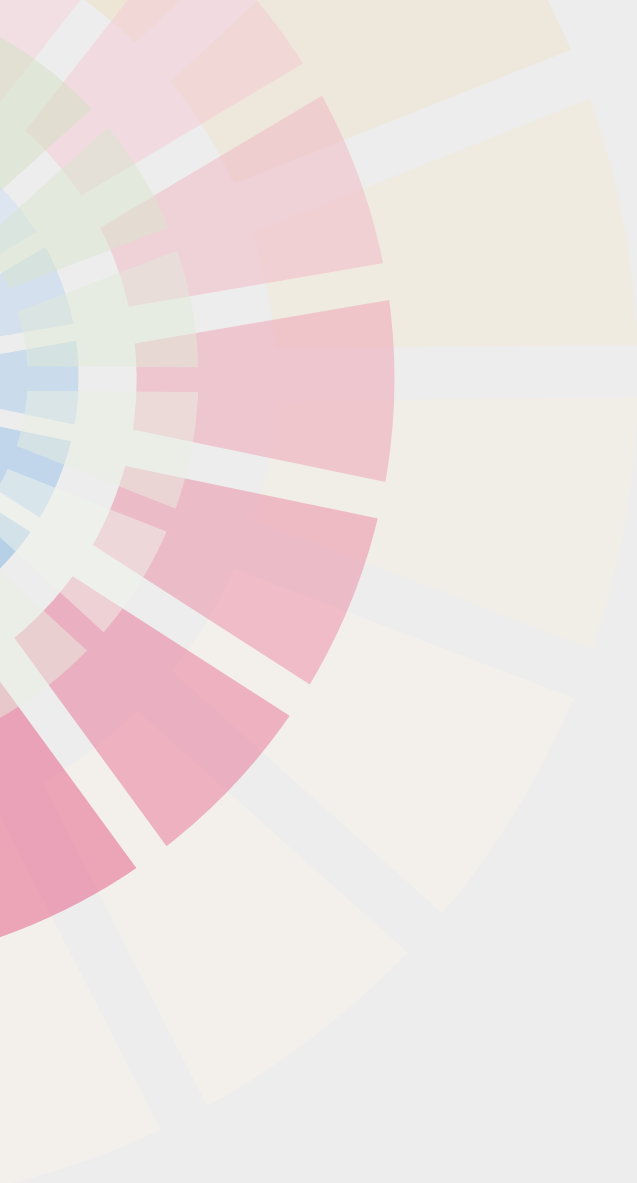
ENDNOTES

- 1 UN DESA 2018; Chant and Mcllwaine 2016.
- 2 UN DESA 2019. In developing regions, slum populations, as a share of the urban population, are on the decline, but the number of slum dwellers, estimated at over 880 million in 2014, is progressively increasing. See UN-Habitat 2016.
- 3 For readability, the terms *slum* and *slum-like* are used interchangeably.
- 4 103 women per 100 men or more.
- 5 UN DESA 2016.
- 6 Migration from rural to urban areas and natural population increase – the difference between births and deaths in urban areas – drive urban growth, with the relative contribution of each factor varying with time and place, depending on fertility and urbanization rates. See United Nations 2012.
- 7 Chant and Mcllwaine 2009; Priya Uteng 2011.
- 8 UN Women calculations based on ICF International’s 2007–2018 Demographic and Health Surveys, on a sample of 61 low- and middle-income countries.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 The data available prevent a broader analysis of gender that goes beyond the binary female/male sex distinction. Currently, no international standard for collecting and measuring gender identity data exists, meaning there is a consequent lack of data about those who are vulnerable to inequality and discrimination because they associate or identify beyond the binary female/male.
- 11 According to the internationally agreed definition, a dwelling unit is considered to provide sufficient living area if there are fewer than four people per habitable room. For a full description of all four criteria, see the indicator metadata, which can be found at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/metadata-compilation/Metadata-Goal-11.pdf>.
- 12 UN DESA 2014.
- 13 Chant 2013; Tacoli 2012.
- 14 Globally, there are more males aged 0–14 and 15–49 than females of the same age cohorts in urban areas: 94 and 96 women for every 100 men, aged 0–14 and 15–49, respectively.
- 15 IOM 2015; Awumbila 2017; Awumbila 2015.
- 16 UN DESA 2014. The overall sex ratios for individuals aged 15 to 49 in China and India are biased towards men: 93 and 92 women per 100 men, respectively. Research has shown that prenatal sex selection and son preference are significant contributors to this bias. See International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF 2017 and Hesketh et al. 2011.
- 17 Tacoli 2013.
- 18 UN Women 2019.
- 19 Hoang 2008; Peberdy and Dinat 2005.
- 20 Evans 2019; ADB 2001.
- 21 Hughes and Wickeri 2011.
- 22 Chant and Mcllwaine 2016.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 World Economic Forum 2016.
- 25 Dey and Basak 2017; Banks 2013; World Bank 2007.
- 26 Institute for Public Policy Research 2018; UN-Habitat 2010b; UN-Habitat 2007. The Global Housing Programme (GHP) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia offers housing to low-income communities by lottery. However, 30 per cent of units are reserved for women followed by a lottery for the remaining 70 per cent (for both men and women). There is also a provision of financial support for women-headed households that cannot afford a down payment. UN-Habitat added the GHP of Addis Ababa to its best practices database. The Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) and Namibia Housing Action Group support urban women in low-income communities to secure affordable shelter in 13 regions of Namibia. They were finalists and winners for World Habitat Awards in 2008.
- 27 Chant and Mcllwaine 2016.
- 28 United Nations 2012.
- 29 UN-Habitat 2018.
- 30 Prindex 2019.
- 31 Amnesty International 2010a; World Bank 2007; Chaplin and Kalita 2017.
- 32 Amnesty International 2010b; UN-Habitat 2015; United Nations 2019.
- 33 United Nations 2019.
- 34 Loughnan et al. 2016.
- 35 UN DESA 2015.
- 36 Kimani et al. 2014.
- 37 The 12 countries selected for this outcome analysis are those in which the slum sex ratios are most skewed towards women.
- 38 Moser 2009.
- 39 The 12 countries selected for this outcome analysis are those in which the slum sex ratios are most skewed towards women.
- 40 Chant and Mcllwaine 2016 (for school dropout) and UN-Habitat, Global Urban Indicators database 2019 version (for antenatal care and skilled attendance at birth).
- 41 Nayak and Gupta 2019.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 UN Women 2018.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 SDG indicator 11.1.1 measures the *proportion of urban population living in slums*. It classifies slum households as households that meet at least one out of five criteria listed in Box 1.
- 48 UNSD 2018.
- 49 SDG indicator 1.4.2. measures the *proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure*. It is currently classified as a Tier II indicator by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.
- 50 Chant and Mcllwaine 2016.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid.

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