



NEWS RELEASE

New report finds more than 40 countries maintained restrictions on women's economic rights from 2018 to 2020; 13 countries lifted restrictions

March 8, 2023

For immediate release

TORONTO— Despite improvements worldwide, 42 countries continued to have restrictions on the economic rights of women over a recent two-year period while 13 countries lifted legal restrictions on women's economic rights, finds a new study released by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank, in recognition of International Women's Day, tracks changes in economic freedom for women around the world.

Economic freedom refers to the ability of people to make self-determining economic decisions including the ability to own property, decide what to buy, where to work, whether to start a business, engage in trade, and even open a bank account.

"In countries where men and women enjoy the same economic rights, women live longer, healthier lives while also benefiting society by creating a more prosperous society and increasing economic activity," said Rosemarie Fike, senior fellow at the Fraser Institute, economics instructor at Texas Christian University, and author of this year's [*Women and Progress*](#) report.

This year's report, [*Women's Economic Rights—Moving Closer to Gender Equality?*](#) tracks changes in economic freedom for women around the world and finds that 13 countries improved their Gender Disparity Index score by relaxing legal restrictions on women's economic rights from 2018 to 2020.

During the same two-year period, however, 42 countries continued restrictions on women's economic rights. Notably, six countries declined significantly: Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Malaysia, and Oman.

There are even restrictions on a woman's ability to open a bank account, with only 32.7 per cent of women having bank accounts in the least economically free countries compared to 42.6 per cent of men. On the other hand, in the most economically free societies, 82.8 per cent of women and 85.6 per cent of men have bank accounts.

"These changes in women's economic rights have already started to exert a significant impact on women's well-being, as well as society's," said Fike.

"This International Women's Day, let's take meaningful steps to improve the wellbeing of women and girls everywhere by granting them equal access to the institutions that help protect economic rights and allow women worldwide the ability to make their own economic decisions, and therefore take greater control over the course of their lives."

The [*Women and Progress*](#) report is part of the Fraser Institute's internationally-renowned [*Economic Freedom of the World*](#).

For a free PDF download and more information, visit www.womenandprogress.org.

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