

# Women, Work and Economic Development



Committed to Good



## AN EXAMINATION OF WOMEN'S ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT AFFECTED STATES

**While there has been crucial progress made towards gender equality and women's empowerment across the world over the past decades, there is still much progress to be made.**

The global COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed this, and at the same time has put this progress in jeopardy. A crucial way to contribute to efforts for women's empowerment over the long-term is to strengthen women's access to decent work, as in SDG 8, in the fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS) that would benefit from their economic contributions the most.

Drawn from desk-based research and interviews with actors in the field, this white paper by CTG explores the opportunities and barriers to women's decent employment within the humanitarian and development sectors, and most importantly how to overcome them. Taking such steps will result in a substantial ripple effect that catalyses the development of fragile and conflict affected states and provides invaluable benefits not just for the women, but also for their families and wider communities.

### THE VALUE OF FORMAL EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN IN FCAS



Currently, **4 in 10 women** living in FCAS are formally employed and paid, compared to **7 in 10 men**.



Over **30 million women** are **not employed** in the formal labour sector of economies that need their contributions the most.



Globally, not only are **700 million fewer women in paid work than men**, but those in paid work earn on average **24% less than men**.



In developing regions, **85% of women work in insecure jobs in the informal sector**.



In Yemen and Afghanistan up to **50% of married women have no control over household spending** on major purchases.



**10% of married women** in developing regions are **not consulted on how their own cash earnings are spent**.

- Globally, in both formal and informal employment women are paid less than men and sometimes not even at all for the work they do.
- Employing women in decent work can lay the foundations for transformative change in gender dynamics by challenging pervasive gendered expectations and stereotypes.
- This coupled with earning an income can provide women with a measure of agency that they are otherwise denied.
- Agency can go a long way to reduce the impact of 'secondary poverty' for women. This occurs when household income or resources are unequally distributed in favour of a male head of household, leaving women and children dependent and sometimes needlessly impoverished.

## HOW WORKING WOMEN CAN SUPPORT THE ECONOMIES OF FCAS

Women's ability to work for pay is cited by the World Bank as one of the 'most visible and game changing events in the life of modern households and communities'.

Women's meaningful participation in the economy and local and national governance is especially important for the strong recovery of fragile and conflict affected countries.

### ECONOMIC GAINS THAT CAN BE MADE FROM GENDER EQUALITY

The McKinsey Global Institute calculated that if women participated in the world's economy equally to men, it could add as much as **US\$28 trillion or 26% to the annual global GDP.**



**812 million women** living in emerging and low-income nations **& 264 million women** living in FCAS have the potential for greater engagement with their economies

### ECONOMIC LOSSES CAUSED BY GENDER INEQUALITY

**19 of the World Bank's 36** fragile and conflict affected countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa economic losses due to gender inequality stand at **\$2.5 trillion.**



Calculations have shown that prior to the onset of conflict in 2014, Yemen's GDP could have **increased by 27%** had gender gaps been closed by increasing women's labour participation.

Working women spur local economic reconstruction. For FCAS, gender inequality and preventing women's access to the labour market represents both a lost opportunity for economic growth and results in direct economic losses.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: PEACE AND RECONSTRUCTION

*"... Addressing economic empowerment issues during conflict and post-conflict phases is a prevention strategy, as disputes over access to economic resources are one of the most prevalent drivers of conflict. If we are serious about sustaining peace, we can no longer allow women's economic rights to remain a blind spot in efforts to respond to crises and plan for peace".*

UN Security Council Report of the Secretary-General, Women Peace and Security, 9 October 2019, S/2019/800

- Current post-conflict reconstruction efforts are dominated by and overwhelmingly benefit men.
- Women are rarely mobilised into well-paid permanent employment opportunities alongside men in large scale development projects.
- CTG and others in the development field are keen to involve women in peace building and reconstruction because ensuring that women are active participants can help strengthen peace.



With women at the negotiating table, **peace accords are 35% more likely to last.**

## MISLEADING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WORKING WOMEN IN FCAS



Women require special treatment



Security and access are barriers for women



Childcare is a barrier for working women



Only men are breadwinners



Qualified women do not exist



Only men are prejudiced against women

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECRUITING WOMEN IN THE HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT SECTORS IN FCAS

CTG alone has people employed in **over 1500 different humanitarian/development job roles** – all of which are available to women.



- There is a wide variety of roles available in the development and humanitarian sector due to the diverse nature of development needs.
- Technical experts are required in areas including but not limited to infrastructure, irrigation, public health, food distribution, rule of law, governance, water, and sanitation. Humanitarian and development programmes also require coordination, logistical, financial, and monitoring support.

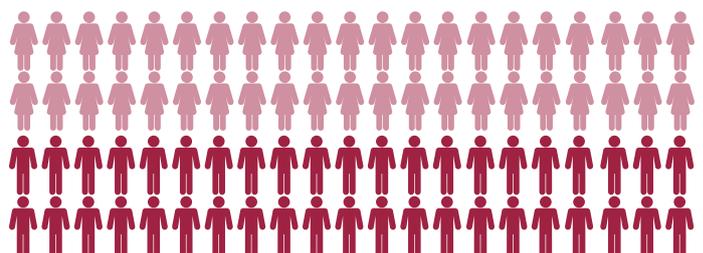
## BARRIERS TO EMPLOYING WOMEN IN THE HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT SECTORS IN FCAS

- CTG has encountered a range of barriers when recruiting women – these barriers emerge at each stage of the recruitment process:

1. When candidates are sourced
2. When qualified candidates are presented to clients
3. When candidates are selected for employment

- Barriers begin affecting women from early childhood by manifesting themselves as widespread social expectations of men and women's roles and their respective capabilities.
- Women have fewer opportunities for education compared to men, their access to public spaces, networks and resources are restricted, which limits their access to decent work in the long-term too.

Not employing large numbers of women to conduct humanitarian and development field work can lead to half the population being underrepresented at best, and completely missed at worse. For humanitarian and development projects to achieve their desired outcomes it is not just an option to employ women, but an essential component.



# FEMALEFIRST

HOW CTG IS STRIVING TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS OBSTRUCTING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO DECENT EMPLOYMENT IN FCAS

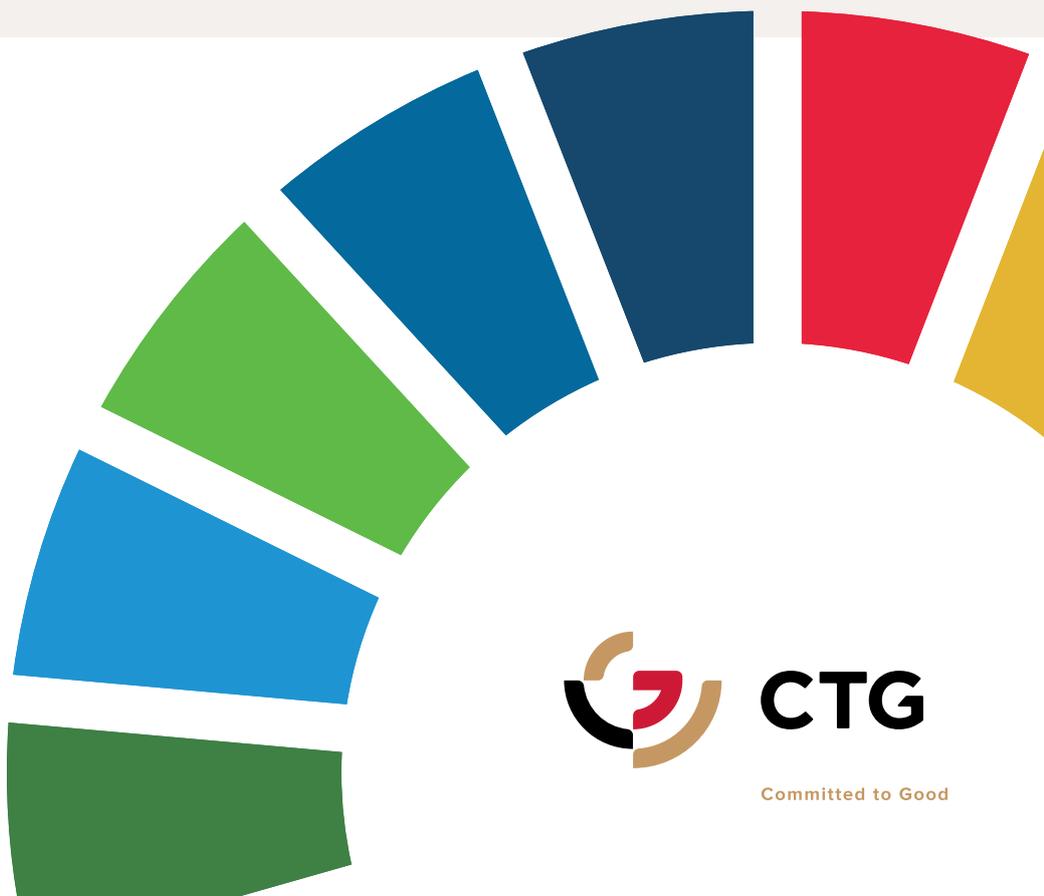
**Goal:** By 2030, 30% of CTG's project-related roles will be represented by women.

## FEMALE FIRST IS MADE UP OF FOUR PROJECTS:



Take a look at our accompanying toolkit to see what steps your organisation can take to empower women in the workplace.

Make sure to download the full white paper **“Women, Work and Economic Employment: An Examination of Women's Access to Employment in Fragile and Conflict Affected States”**



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