

**May 15, 2024 FINAL DRAFT**

### **“We the Women” Report**

The United Nations Office for Partnerships commissioned John Zogby Strategies to conduct a survey of women from the United Nations worldwide network. A total of 25,854 responses from women in 185 countries were collected from March 8 through April 26, 2024 and analyzed. While this in no way can be described as a random probability sample, it still represents a voluminous and powerful expression of sentiment. A full and detailed statement on methodology and sample profile appears at the end of the document

### **Overview**

Survey results, especially of this magnitude, do not have to be surprising to be stunning. Overall, large numbers speaking in one voice are aware of serious challenges facing their lives and their fellow citizens, expect that these challenges will become even more acute in the next decade, but are not pessimistic about the future. They clearly identify pathways for leadership to meet these obstacles going forward and point the way for a greater role for women in global and local leadership.

As we examine the numbers, we always need to remember that each datapoint is a real woman with a range of needs, views, emotions, responsibilities, and aspirations. We have learned women’s overall priorities not only for today but over the next decade. Even though there is a breeze of optimism that is emerging, the expectations of problems are getting worse – especially at a time when national governments are experiencing severe crises in capacity and public trust. Nevertheless, large numbers of women worldwide feel strongly that it is national governments who mainly must provide solutions to these challenges. But the survey reveals also that they feel there is room for other institutions to step up.

### **Optimism Over Pessimism**

There is a strong sense that these women surveyed feel some progress in their own lives. Overall, 61% say that their own “quality of life is better off than” it was five years ago. Only 10% say they are worse off and 23% are not sure. The optimism over pessimism pervades in every region, notably in Africa (67% to 8% and Asia and Oceania 61%-10%). Regions reporting slightly lower but still impressive ratios include Western Europe and Others (which includes the United States and Canada) where the ratio is 53%-12%, Eastern Europe (46%-10%), and Latin America (60%-10%)

Of great significance is that a solid majority (57%) expect their quality of life to be better over the next five years vs. only 9% who expect it to be worse.

### Obstacles That Could Prevent a Better Life Five Years from Now

We asked about obstacles that might prevent a better quality of life in the next five years. Respondents were presented with five issues and asked once again to rate their importance on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being of greatest concern. Here is the ranking on the basis of those receiving scores of 4 and 5 combined.

Possible Obstacle	% 4-5 combined
Mental health issues	46
Time intensive care of children, family, others	42
Gender inequality in household work	41
Insufficient access to sexual/reproductive health & rights	29
Domestic violence	27

Of special note is the overall ranking of mental health, where the numbers are high across the board. Secondly, is the salience of family responsibilities which are time-consuming, perceived as time-consuming, and, if not addressed, are seen as possible roadblocks to the aspirations and self-actualization of women. Next, the survey reveals a number of issues that women feel must be addressed, but mental health may prove to be the plague of this generation.

### Issues that Already and Will Continue to Affect the Quality of Life of Women

<b><i>Affect Quality of Life Now</i></b>	<b>% 4-5 combined</b>	<b><i>Affect Quality of Life Next Decade</i></b>	<b>% 4-5 combined</b>
Climate Change	50	Climate Change	59
Economic Insecurity	50	Economic Insecurity	50
Gender Inequality	48	Gender Inequality	45
Weak Education System	44	Insufficient Social Protections	44
Insufficient Social Protections	43	Gender-Based Violence	44
Gender-Based Violence	42	Weak Education Systems	43
Lack Access Healthcare/Reproductive Health	36	War/Conflict	43
War/Conflict	33	Lack Access Healthcare/Reproductive Health	41
Food Insecurity	32	Food Insecurity	39

Lack of Access to Technology	27	Lack of Access to Technology	30
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The rankings remain fairly constant between the perception of now and into the next decade. What is most significant is the dramatic rises in concern over climate change (9 points) and war and conflict (10 points). Climate change's importance is driven by large spikes in concern in the West (46% now to 68% in the next decade) and Eastern Europe (39% to 56%) and. The percentage of those worried about war and conflict rose 14 points in Eastern Europe (47% to 61%).

### Personal Goals and Aspirations

A majority of respondents overall (51%) say that they are "in control of my future". This includes a range from 47% in Latin America and 49% in Eastern Europe to 51% in Africa and Asia Pacific/Oceania and 52% in the West. However, about a third reveal that they do not feel in control of their future.

### Artificial Intelligence: Threat or Opportunity Over the Next Years

AI receives mixed reviews. On the whole, about twice as many (45%) view it as an opportunity over 24% who say it is mainly a threat and 19% are not sure. The positives are around half in every region except the West where AI is seen as more of an opportunity by only 39%. However, when we dig a little deeper and ask those polled about specific impacts, there is a lot more introspection. Look how different the reactions are:

Impact	% Positive	% Negative
Educational Opportunities	64	16
Your Job Prospects	41	33
Your Individual Security	31	39
Your Human/Civil Liberties	29	3

The highest positive for job prospects is in Africa (50%) and the lowest in Western Europe (32% with 36% negative), the only region that is upside down in this category. All regions give high marks to AI for opening up educational opportunities (Africa 69%, Asia 67%, Eastern Europe 65%, Latin America 65% and Western Europe 54%).

### The Impact of Climate Change

Almost half of those surveyed (48%) tell us that they are "personally now affected" by climate change, particularly in the Southern Hemisphere (South America 65%, Sub-Saharan Africa (64%). Another two in five (38%) say they "will be affected in the next decade". As we can see below, health is the major concern, followed by natural disasters.

<b>Climate Change Impact on</b>	<b>% Saying Most Impacted</b>
Health (Quality Air & Water)	73
Natural Disasters	62
Scarcity of Food	37
Loss of Economic Opportunities	25
War & Conflict	18
Forced Displacement	14

While health and environmental quality dominate in every region, fear of natural disasters abounds in every region (from 50% in Africa to 62%-71% in every other region), scarcity of food is a special concern in Latin American 48% and Africa (45%), and loss of economic opportunity is a worry in Africa and Asia (29% each). About one in four are deeply concerned about war and conflict in Eastern Europe (28%) and Western Europe (25%).

### **The Impact of Armed Conflict Over the Next Decade**

One in five (22%) believe that armed conflict is affecting them right now and another 30% say it will affect them in the next decade – a combined majority. This includes 70% in Eastern Europe (43% now, 27% in the next decade).

### **Providing Solutions**

Despite a global crisis in governance and, in many cases, record levels of distrust, the women surveyed still see the “primary responsibility for solving these challenges over the next decade” with governments.

When asked who they think should hold primary responsibility for solving these challenges in the next decade, the overwhelming response was national government.

<b>Who Has Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>% Yes</b>
National Government	73
Local Governments	34
United Nations/International Organizations	30
Individuals	29
Civil Society	13
Governments of Wealthier Countries	12
Private Sector	10

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The United Nations established SDGs and wondered how these rank among the women we polled. The 17 goals are ordered below:

<b>Sustainable Development Goal</b>	<b>% Rated Among Top Three</b>
Good health and well-being	40
Quality education	38
Peace, justice, strong institutions	33
Gender equality	25
No poverty	24
Decent work/economic growth	24
Climate action	23
Zero hunger	21
Reduced inequalities	16
Clean water/sanitation	16
Sustainable cities/communities	10
Responsible consumption/production	8
Industry/innovation/infrastructure	8
Affordable/Clean energy	6
Partnership for these goals	4
Life on land	3
Life in water	2

### **Report Card on Countries Working Together to Find Solutions**

A clear picture has emerged on the types and salience of issues women feel they are facing today and into the future. We also have learned who they feel is most responsible to resolve these issues. But how do they rate international efforts at collaborating to deal with these concerns? Do they have a positive or negative picture on countries working together to find solutions?

<b>Major Issue Faced</b>	<b>% Countries Working Well</b>	<b>% Countries Not Working Well</b>
Lack of access to tech	34	66
Gender inequality	30	57
Lack of access to health care	29	62
Weak education systems	27	57
Climate change	27	52
Food insecurity	26	55
Gender-based violence	25	58

Insufficient social protection	24	45
Economic insecurity	21	57
War and conflict	19	54

These are dismal ratings and raise life-and-death questions about the future of governance and responsibility. There is a deep crisis of confidence in governing institutions and national governments are in the middle of wild swings between populism, weak centrist coalitions, and technocratic models. With most of these issues, the African women polled tended to be more upbeat about how nations are presently working together to provide solutions, but still offer what cannot be regarded as good grades. Yet, the women surveyed worldwide still look to national and local governments to provide solutions. As noted earlier, those surveyed recognize a role that international institutions liked the United Nations and its agencies can and must play in resolving the critical issues listed above. The UN and its agencies have gone a long way toward establishing efforts toward global cooperation toward meeting SDGs, but the numbers above reveal just how far they have to go.

### Women and Leadership

An impressive majority (60%) think that women's representation in leadership in their country will progress over the next decade. Only 10% overall feel it will regress and 23% are not sure. The ratios are strong in every region – 67% to 8% in Africa, 61% to 10% in Asia, 46% to 10% in Eastern Europe, 60% to 10% in Latin America, and 63% to 12% in the West. The respondents say that the best way to ensure that young women achieve positions of leadership in national and global affairs is through favorable governmental policies (49%), followed by better educational systems (40%), and more economic opportunities for young women and more networking and inter-generational support (tied with 36%) – followed very closely by more young women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs (35%). Only 9% support quotas.

Eighty-five percent of our respondents consider themselves to be “women's rights advocates”, which is true across every region – 87% in Africa, 81% in Asia, 77% in Eastern Europe, 90% in Latin America, and 85% in the West.

We asked how best “to ensure that women's voices/perspectives can help shape the future of the world”.

<b>Effort Needed to Ensure More Participation by Women</b>	<b>% Selected Two</b>
More leadership positions in international organizations, national and	69

local governments, and global issues	
Collecting women's voices/aspirations on a regular basis	48
More consultations with women's networks on global matters	41
More women as heads of governments/states	37

All of these are important factors but it is most intriguing that by far the top choice sees the essential role of NGOs, government positions, and private sector institutions as the best way to ensure equal representation of women's voices, as opposed to the highest positions in government.

### Observations

These are not the results of a random probability survey, but from the volume and breadth of geographic sources, the responses present clear messages into how over 25,000 women in the United Nations network worldwide view their future overall and through the prism of uniquely women's concerns (like gender equality both in the community and at home), personal aspirations, the uber-challenges of AI and climate change, and the need for more representation of women in the corridors of power. The challenges emerge and we have validation of a list of priorities. We know that access to health and mental health rank near or at the very top. Gender equality in society, the workplace, and even at home are among the top as we move toward the next generation of leadership. There is a strong belief that governments at all levels must not escape responsibility for providing solutions, but there is plenty of room for international and local NGOs and the private sector to form alliances of cooperation and training for young women leaders today.

The Millennial Goals have been defined. Now perhaps it is time to refine the Millennial Solutions featuring programs directly targeting Millennial and Gen Z – age women leaders. Videos and social media must not be used so much to find and shine light on lesser-seen problems, but on women's stories about solutions.

### Methodology

The United Nations Office of Partnerships commissioned John Zogby Strategies to conduct a worldwide survey of adult women within the United Nations Network. The polling universe includes, but is not limited to women who are:

- UN employees
- UN social media followers across various accounts
- United Nations partners and their social media followers at the global level

- United Nations partners at country level – NGOs, Governments, private sector and their followers, members
- United Nations beneficiaries
- UN Volunteers, online volunteers
- Communities, families, students

Zogby Strategies did not employ a method of “random probability sampling” but instead utilized the global dissemination network of the United Nations in 185 countries, specifically:

- Spreading the survey via social media accounts such as Instagram, X (Twitter), and LinkedIn.
- Sharing the survey via email: emails to all of the UN Resident Coordinators and their UN Country Teams, Emails to partners, global NGOs, networks, companies for their employees, newsletter lists, civil society partners, UN led trust funds grantees, individual women that have attended previous events.
- Online UN Volunteers across the world with the task to have 40 women in their communities respond to the survey. Over 400 were recruited although not all delivered.

The survey was offered in the six official United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish) plus Portuguese.

### **Sample Characteristics**

Frequencies represent the total number of responses per category. Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding. While the respondents are younger, more highly educated, single, and residents of urban areas, this is indeed representative of the United Nations Network, not the population of women as a whole. Since the focus of the survey is on the future, accentuating the view of younger women is particularly vital.

- For more information including frequency report, sample characteristics, and list of nations – click [here](#)
- For crosstabs – click [here](#)
- For the master copy of the survey instrument – click [here](#)



## Addendum to Final Report – Analysis of The Generations

For the most part, the women in the survey were in sync on issues involving obstacles and opportunities.

- Two examples - both younger and older stood at 85% describing themselves as advocates of women's rights and 51% each said they were mainly in control of their own lives.

Notable differences between the views of those 18-34 years of age and those over 35 include:

- Younger women were substantially more inclined to describe their quality of life as better today than five years ago over the older group (56%-47%). They were also less inclined to say they were worse off (13% to 21%) than those over 35.
- Significantly — the younger cohort is 22 points more like to feel that their quality of life will be better in the next five years (63% to 43%). They are half as likely to see their lives getting worse 7% to 13%.

There are some sharp differences on how they view possible obstacles to their future.

- The 18–34-year-olds are 8 points more likely to see insufficient access to reproductive/sexual rights as an obstacle (32% to 24%).
- 12 points more likely to regard mental health as an obstacle (50% to 38%),
- 10 points more likely be concerned about domestic violence as a problem for them (31% to 21%).
- and 7 points more likely to worry about gender inequality (43% to 36%).

Younger women are also more inclined to see positives in the impact of artificial intelligence.

- By 48% to 41% the younger group see AI as more of an opportunity than threat vs older women.
- 33%-26% see the positive impact on their individual security.
- 32% to 24% positive on human rights and 67% to 59% more positive about the impact on educational opportunities.

Finally, 63% of the younger women say they see progress on women's representation in leadership vs. 55% of those over 35.