



**Think governments  
are achieving gender  
diversity in the  
workforce? Think again.**

How five disconnects are holding  
back gender parity

**Women. Fast forward**





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## Navigating disruption

Governments today are facing unprecedented challenges that bring new pressures for innovative solutions. Greater diversity of thought, experience and perspective is vital if governments are to respond effectively to these challenges. Having a high-performing public sector workforce with the best and brightest leaders has never been more important.

Transformative global forces are disrupting and reshaping our world, with far-reaching impacts on international and domestic businesses, economies, industries, societies, cultures and individuals – all of which correspond to the interconnected web of policy and service responsibilities that governments must meet.

This creates a uniquely challenging environment in which governments operate. It is also the reason why, now more than ever, governments and public sector organizations require the best talent available to enhance their analysis and understanding of complex global issues.

To navigate this era of disruption successfully, governments need more diversity among those who make decisions on behalf of their citizens – whether elected representatives, senior public servants or other public sector leaders.

Empowering and encouraging women to participate more fully in public administration will help governments better reflect the diversity of the societies they represent. It will also mean that they are better placed to design policies and programs that meet citizens' diverse needs.

At present, though, research shows that women remain significantly underrepresented in senior public sector leadership roles.

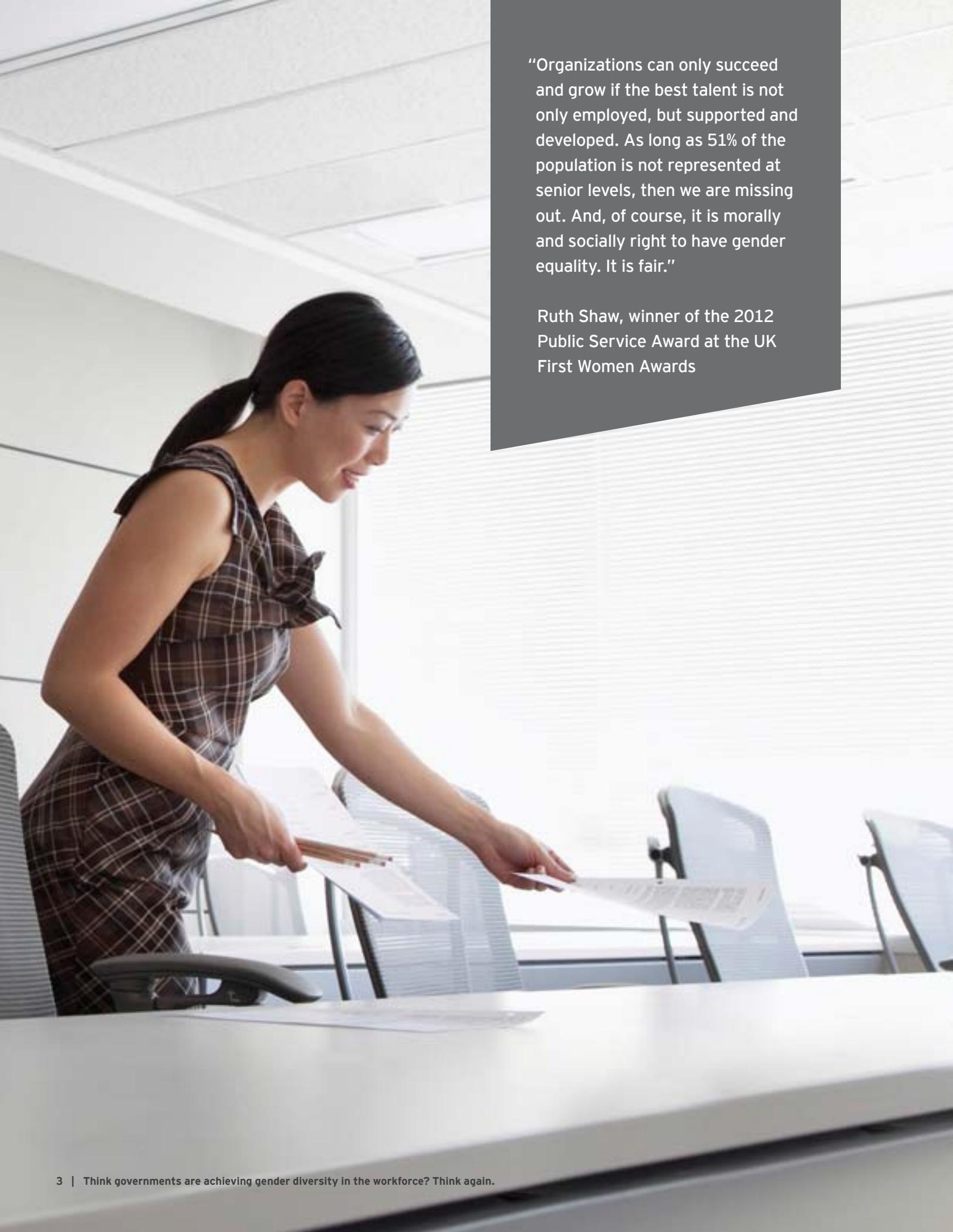
What can governments and public sector organizations do to accelerate gender parity, particularly at leadership levels?

To understand the issues better, EY conducted a survey of 80 public sector leaders across 17 countries around the world. Our research revealed that leaders overwhelmingly acknowledge that gender diversity in senior leadership is important for navigating change. But it also highlights several barriers that must be overcome to achieve gender parity.

Closing the gender gap requires fresh thinking and a commitment to change. We hope that the findings of this report will help government and public sector organizations in their quest to improve gender parity.

**This is work that can, should and must begin today.**

**At EY, we believe that diversity is a key driver of innovation, which in turn leads to better outcomes for society. We are committed to helping drive debate and discussion on how women leaders can and must play a more significant role in the public sector.**

A woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a brown and white plaid sleeveless dress, is standing in a conference room. She is leaning forward, handing a document to someone seated at a long white table. The room has large windows with blinds and several office chairs around the table. The lighting is bright and natural.

“Organizations can only succeed and grow if the best talent is not only employed, but supported and developed. As long as 51% of the population is not represented at senior levels, then we are missing out. And, of course, it is morally and socially right to have gender equality. It is fair.”

Ruth Shaw, winner of the 2012 Public Service Award at the UK First Women Awards

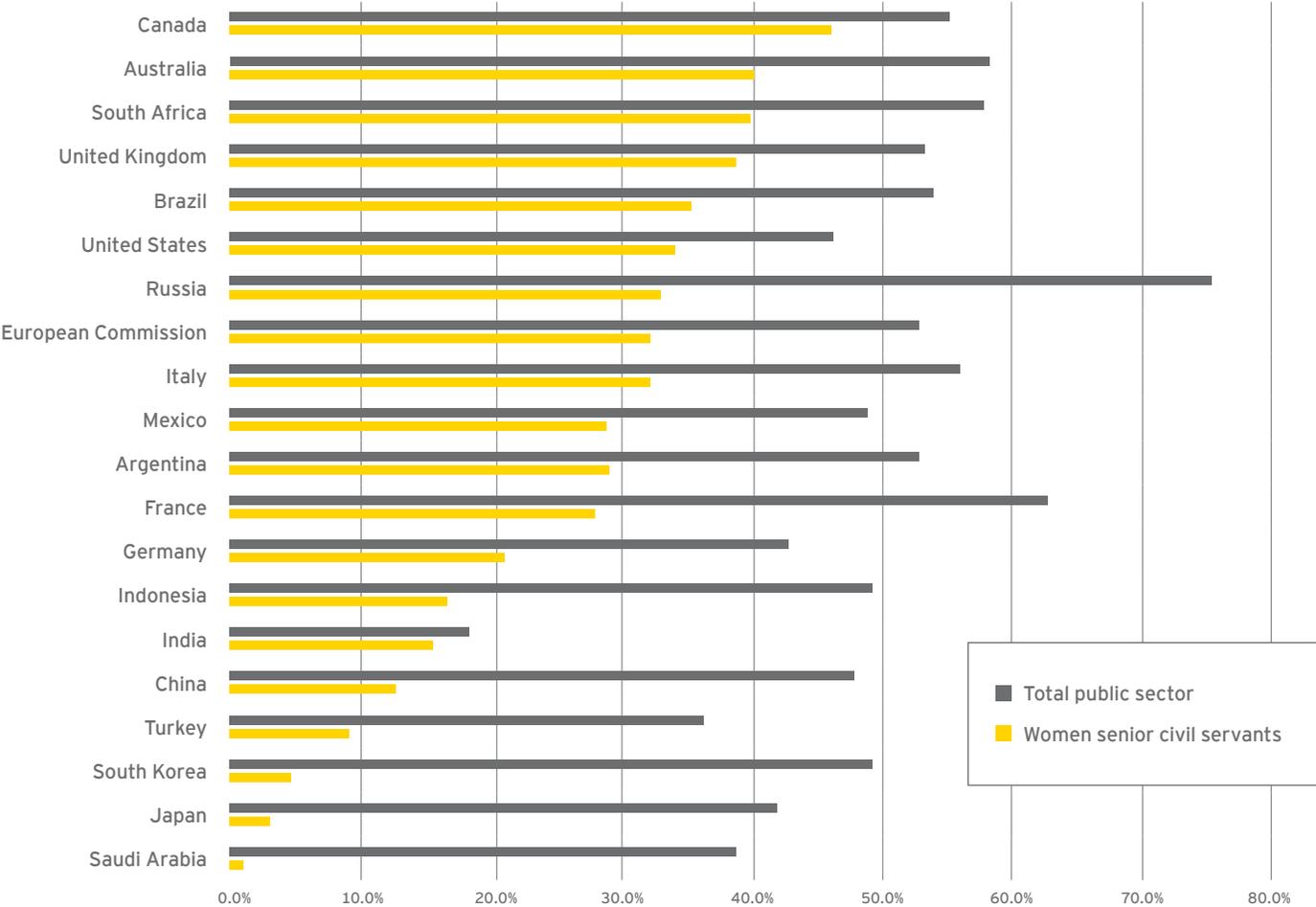
### Is the public sector doing enough to promote and encourage women leaders?

There has been extensive research and public commentary on the benefits of having women leaders in businesses and on private sector boards. However, similar research for the public sector has been relatively minimal. To address this, EY began producing the annual Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders in 2012 to better understand the state of affairs for women in public sector leadership roles across G20 countries. Have years of public sector policies, legislation, targets and quotas delivered women into senior leadership roles? Do we see the widespread diversity that is now so crucial?

The index shows that women remain significantly underrepresented in senior public sector leadership roles in most G20 countries. The latest index, compiled in 2015, revealed that women make up almost 50% of the public sector workforce in the G20 but just under one-quarter of public sector leaders (defined as non-elected senior executives across federal or national governments). Women hold at least one-third of public sector leadership roles in just six countries: Canada (46%), Australia (40%), South Africa (40%), the United Kingdom (39%), Brazil (35%) and the United States (34%).

The index does show some progress toward gender parity: the proportion of women in public sector leadership roles has increased over the three-year research period in all but two of the countries surveyed. But progress has not been fast, and the rates of increase vary widely.

G20 members, percentage of women in senior public sector roles versus all women in the public sector



Source: Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders, 2015

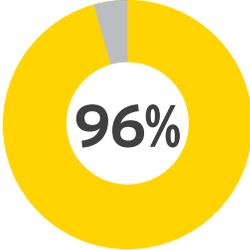
# Navigating disruption without gender diversity? Think again.

## How five disconnects are holding back gender diversity

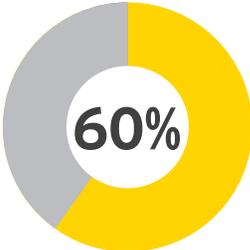
In a time of monumental change for governments and public sector organizations, the ability to draw on a diverse pool of talent – including a mix of genders, ethnicities, ages and backgrounds – is a critical factor in helping governments adapt to the changes disrupting the sector. There is strong evidence that diverse and inclusive leadership sparks better debate, stimulates innovation, and enhances problem-solving and decision-making. In short, it leads to improved performance and better outcomes.

In mid-2016, EY surveyed 80 government and public sector leaders from a range of countries. We wanted to understand their views on gender parity at the leadership level. The survey built on an earlier study involving interviews with 350 business leaders from seven sectors: automotive, banking and capital markets, consumer products, insurance, life sciences, oil and gas, and power and utilities.

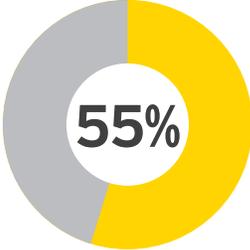
Our research reveals overwhelming agreement that gender diversity is crucial to combating the challenges faced by the public sector. Despite valuing diversity, many public sector organizations are not addressing the gender gap in a way that will deliver the needed change. Sixty percent of respondents believe they do not have sufficient diversity of thought and experience within their leadership team.



believe diversity of thought and experience will be key to navigating public sector changes



agree that they do not have sufficient diversity of thought and experience within the leadership team



agree that women are the single-biggest underutilized pool of talent in the public sector today



Through our research, we identified five disconnects that are holding back government and public sector organizations from achieving gender diversity on their senior leadership team.

1. **The reality disconnect:** Public sector leaders assume the issue is nearly solved despite little progress within their own organizations.
2. **The data disconnect:** Organizations don't effectively measure how well women are progressing through the workforce and into senior leadership.
3. **The pipeline disconnect:** Organizations aren't creating pipelines for future female leaders.
4. **The perception and perspective disconnect:** Men and women don't see the issue of gender parity the same way.
5. **The progress disconnect:** Different sectors agree on the value of diversity but are making uneven progress toward gender parity.

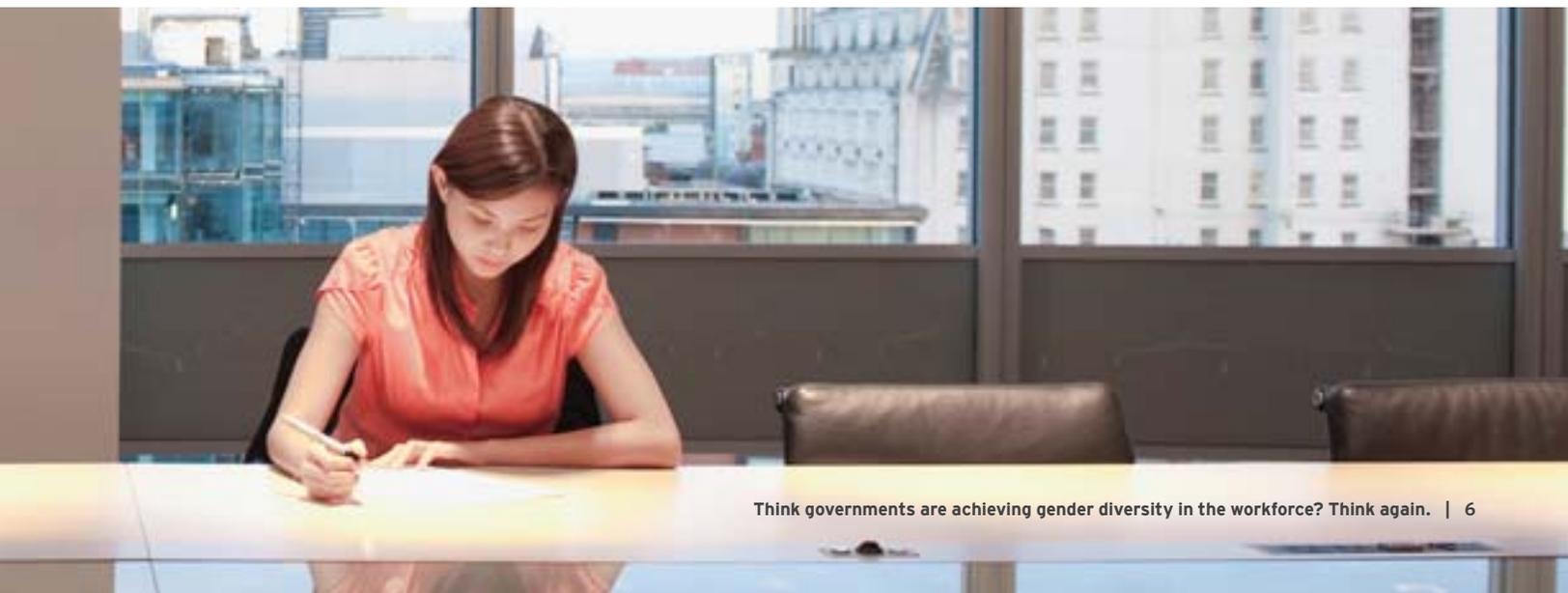
In this report, we explore each of these disconnects to understand better the key barriers that women face in moving ahead in their organizations. We also share our insights on what government and public sector organizations can do to accelerate the journey to gender parity.

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“We are experiencing unprecedented change and digital disruption is feared by some and welcomed by others. But dramatic changes have happened before, and our history provides millions of success stories that in my view have one factor in common: we succeed when we work together and when we utilize knowledge and experiences from all available sources. We have a huge untapped knowledge pool – in all industries and in all countries. Improved gender diversity is an important part of the solution to master change and to turn disruption into opportunities and growth.”

Anne Grette, EY Nordic Government and Public Sector Leader

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## The reality disconnect

**Public sector leaders assume gender inequality has nearly disappeared and therefore are not doing enough to tackle it in their own organizations.**

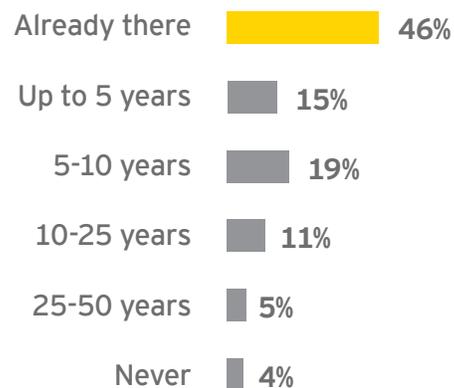
EY's survey shows that government and public sector leaders are making progress in improving gender diversity within their organizations. Forty-six percent of respondents say they have already achieved gender parity on their board (defined as 30%-40% women), and 15% believe they will achieve it within five years. These figures compare favorably with the cross-sector survey, which revealed that just over one-fifth of business leaders believe their organization has already achieved gender parity or will do so within five years.

But the survey findings appear disconnected from reality. According to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2016*,\* it will take until the next century – 2186, to be exact – to reach gender parity in both private and public sectors. Alarming, this has increased 91 years from the 2014 report. The quest for gender parity appears to be going in reverse rather than accelerating.

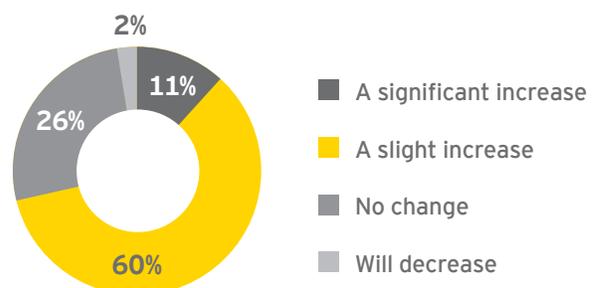
Certainly, our survey findings point to the danger of losing momentum in promoting gender diversity across the government and public sector. Only a quarter of respondents said their organization has an effective diversity strategy that is making a difference while more than 40% say it is poor or even nonexistent. Just 16% have targets for female representation on their board or senior management team, and only 14% have a structured, formal program to identify and develop women's careers in leadership. Nearly half (49%) of respondents say they develop women and men equally as part of an existing leadership program.

**Think the diversity problem has been solved? Think again.**

### How many years will it take to achieve 30%-40% women on your board?



### What change do you expect in the next five years to the number of women in leadership?



\*The Global Gender Gap Report 2016, World Economic Forum, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/cover.pdf>.



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“I don’t think anybody can be satisfied until they hit 50%. ... We’ve had over 40 years of equal opportunities legislation and policy, and it continues to be a great frustration that we can’t get closer to 50%. We mustn’t feel complacent. ... We should keep asking why we have that gap.”

Una O’Brien, former Permanent Secretary of the UK Department of Health

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“Our numbers are very low, and women are underrepresented in first-line leadership roles. While this is changing, it will take considerable time for women to progress through our rank structure in the coming years.”

Director, government department, New Zealand

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## For the leadership

### Ask

- ▶ Given the proven benefits of gender diversity, how well is your organization positioned to reap these rewards?
- ▶ How is a lack of diverse leadership impacting your ability to innovate?
- ▶ What is your plan to achieve gender parity in your leadership team?
- ▶ Is this strategy grounded on concrete steps or just good intentions and wishful thinking?

### Act

- ▶ Take a critical view of where you are now and where you need to be.
- ▶ Align your vision of the future with pathways to get there.
- ▶ Don’t assume gender parity will take care of itself. Implement key enablers of gender parity – from increased and more inclusive networking opportunities to formal training, sponsorship and mentoring programs.

## The data disconnect

**Organizations don't effectively measure how well women are progressing into senior leadership roles.**

If government and public sector organizations are serious about changing the status quo, they need reliable workforce data so they can assess how far they have to go to deliver equal opportunities to female employees.

And yet, only 40% of government and public sector organizations surveyed say they have programs in place to formally measure their progress in improving gender diversity on their leadership team. Those organizations that do measure gender progress are primarily reporting on how many women have already reached senior leadership positions rather than focusing on the pipeline of future leaders. Less than one-quarter (23%) of organizations, for example, track the proportion of female applicants for leadership positions. Few government and public sector organizations seem to have metrics in place to follow women as they move along their career path to see where and why outstanding talent leaves the organization or falls off the leadership track.

To drive the gender parity agenda, we must understand where we stand today, so it is imperative to track the pipeline of women leaders. Doing so will help create an accurate picture of the diversity of today's workforce and determine which interventions will have the greatest impact in the future.

Government and public sector organizations must also be held to account for their efforts to support budding women leaders. However, less than half (48%) of organizations surveyed say they publicly disclose information on their gender diversity performance. A greater commitment to doing so would create greater peer pressure to accelerate and scale up their efforts.

**Think organizations are effectively measuring progress toward gender diversity in leadership? Think again.**

### Top five leadership team gender metrics that are formally reported

Proportion of women on leadership team	<b>43%</b>
Proportion of female applicants to senior management positions	<b>23%</b>
Employee engagement by gender	<b>23%</b>
Gender pay disparities	<b>19%</b>
Retention by gender	<b>19%</b>

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**"I believe that 'if you treasure it, measure it' – so making us aware of where we were was important. That transparency meant that people asked the question: 'Why is department A so far behind department B?'"**

**Sir Gus O'Donnell, former Cabinet Secretary and Head of the UK Civil Service**

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## For the leadership

### Ask

- ▶ What specific gender parity goals do you have?
- ▶ How are you measuring your progress toward these goals?
- ▶ If you aren't measuring progress against a set goal, how do you know when you've achieved it?
- ▶ How do you know what's working and what's not as you strive for greater gender diversity?
- ▶ What are you disclosing publicly about your progress toward gender parity?
- ▶ Will your organization achieve its top priorities without greater gender parity?

### Act

- ▶ Set a concrete target for gender parity.
- ▶ Measure progress toward this target by using clear metrics to count the number of women at all levels and in all areas of your business.
- ▶ Use this data to identify obstacles and enablers to female career advancement.
- ▶ Be more transparent and accountable about gender diversity – this is an increasingly important issue to stakeholders.
- ▶ Use this data to improve efforts to achieve gender parity throughout the organization.

## The pipeline disconnect

**Organizations are not creating pipelines for future female leaders.**

To improve the representation of women in public leadership positions, governments must begin to groom talented women in more junior posts or even from outside government.

More than 80% of government and public sector organizations say they need to change their approach to attracting, retaining and promoting female talent, while at the same time, 71% indicated that they are already effective at attracting female talent. This disconnect is an indicator that organizations need better metrics, and they need a better understanding of the root of their problems around hiring and retaining female talent.

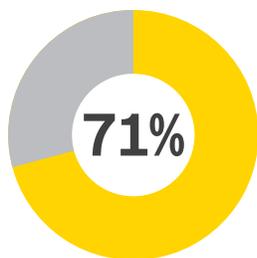
Although more than 71% of respondents believe they are effective at attracting women and 66% at retaining women, they are less effective at developing women into leaders once they are in the organization. Less than half the respondents (49%) believe their organization is effective at identifying future female leaders.

Just 14% of respondents say they have structured, formal programs to identify and develop women for leadership roles in their organization. Around half (49%) say they develop women and men equally as part of an existing leadership program and have no plans to change this.

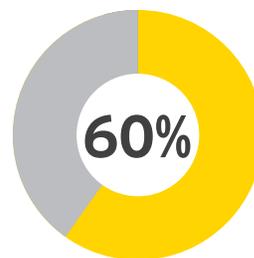
**Think organizations are doing enough to encourage the next generation of women leaders?  
Think again.**

The public sector leaders we interviewed offered feedback on the policies and programs that have helped them to develop female leaders in their own organizations. These include creating a women's program for senior management that can help identify talented candidates for leadership roles; developing internal mentoring programs for women early in their career; undertaking unconscious-bias training across the leadership team; offering opportunities for women to lead key projects; taking steps to identify barriers and implementing interventions to address them, including culture change programs; and appointing female department heads who act as strong role models.

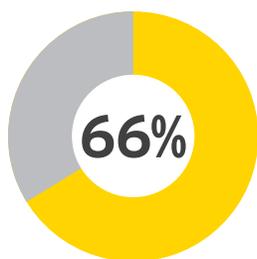
If government and public sector organizations can address the pipeline disconnect, they will reach a tipping point. As more women leaders come through, it will help to reinforce the trend toward gender parity, as women further down the ranks raise their aspirations for career development.



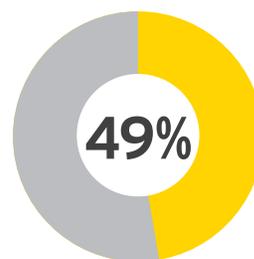
**say their organization is effective at attracting women**



**say their organization is effective at promoting women into leadership positions**



**say their organization is effective at retaining women**



**say their organization is effective at identifying future female leaders**

## Approach to developing women leaders

Develop women and men equally as part of an existing leadership program and do not intend to change this **49%**

Have a structured, formal program to identify and develop women's careers in leadership **14%**

Have an informal program to identify and develop women's careers in leadership but plan to put a more formal program in place **6%**

Have an informal program to identify and develop women's careers in leadership with no plans to formalize it **6%**

None of these/Don't know **25%**

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"Empowering is more than just pushing women into senior roles. It is about giving them the chance to show their talent by offering opportunities to develop abilities not usually fostered when we are girls, like leadership and confidence. There is a significant amount of research that indicates that the role models approach is very effective when it comes to helping women develop their careers. If there is a tangible program to support women into the senior roles path – networking, coaching, mentoring, it is a very qualified starting point for change."

Claudia Valenzuela, Ernst & Young - Brazil,  
Government & Public Sector Director

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## For the leadership

### Ask

- ▶ What is your plan to attract and recruit the most outstanding female talent?
- ▶ Once you've recruited the best women, what is your plan to retain, develop and promote them to senior leadership positions?
- ▶ Are you assigning women to strategic roles so they get the experience they need to progress to senior leadership positions?
- ▶ Do you know if, why and when your leaders of tomorrow are leaving today?

### Act

- ▶ Determine what your organization must do to become an employer of choice for women.
- ▶ Implement formal programs to identify potential female leaders and develop these women in a way that makes sense to them.
- ▶ Ask your female employees how you could improve the senior leadership pipeline.

# The perception and perspective disconnect

Men and women have different views on the gender diversity gap and how to solve it.

Think men and women see the opportunities and barriers for women the same way? Think again.

Our research shows that men and women have different views on the extent of the diversity challenge and the barriers that are holding women back. Although 43% of men believe that the public sector has become a more attractive career choice for women, just 23% of women share that view. Almost two-thirds (64%) of women think government and public sector organizations should do more to attract, retain and promote women, compared with just over one-third (36%) of men. And while 61% of men think their organization is effective at identifying future leaders, only 42% of women share that view.

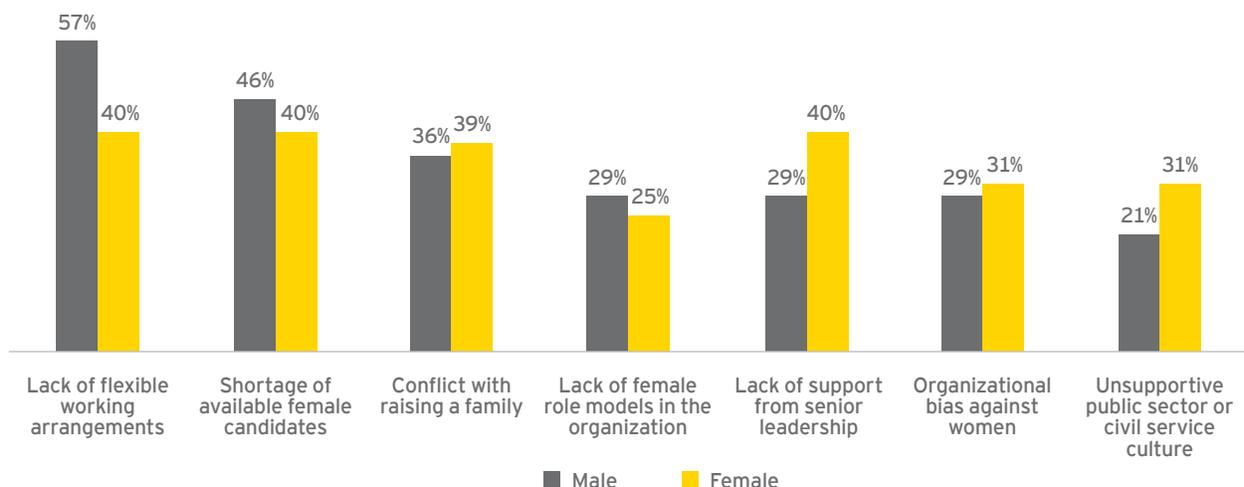
When we asked about the barriers preventing women from reaching leadership positions, we found further divergences. Both genders recognized the lack of flexible working arrangements as one of the key obstacles. However, only 40% of women said it was a challenge, compared with 57% of men. In contrast, women were more likely than their male counterparts to cite issues relating to management, policies and culture. For example, 40% of women

consider lack of support from senior leadership as a barrier to moving up the leadership ladder, compared with 29% of men. Almost one-third of women (31%) believe that an unsupportive public sector culture is a challenge, compared with just 21% of men.

When women and men see the problems differently, it is not surprising that they favor different solutions to address the problems. Both genders agree on the importance of flexible working policies, but 35% of women also cite leadership training for women as important to helping them reach leadership positions, compared with 25% of men. However, less than one in five organizations (19%) actually has a leadership program exclusively for women. Both men and women broadly agree on the importance of mentoring from senior leaders, a public sector or civil service culture that supports and promotes gender diversity and inclusiveness, and formal programs to identify and promote future women leaders as being particularly valuable in helping women reach leadership positions.

## What are the top barriers to women in leadership?

In your view, what are the biggest barriers preventing women from reaching senior leadership positions in your organization?



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“In particular with young female colleagues, I can tell that they don’t consider themselves ready for these positions as they are not confident enough. They don’t seem to have the guts to just go for those leadership positions, in contrast to their male counterparts. Female young colleagues are too restrained.”

Head, federal ministry, Germany

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“Regarding the combination of family life and career ... the important thing is to increase the flexibility and focus on the combination of work and family life: office-based nurseries, the ability to work from home and childcare vouchers ... as well as support around business-related travel.”

Deputy Director, government department, Germany

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## For the leadership

### Ask

- ▶ Are men and women in your organization aligned on their perceptions of the barriers and accelerators to gender parity? How can you bring these perceptions closer together?
- ▶ Have you asked the women in your organization what would enable their career progression?
- ▶ How are you using this feedback to overcome barriers to career progression?
- ▶ Are you embedding a diverse and inclusive corporate culture that embraces all views and is free of conscious and unconscious bias?

### Act

- ▶ Create opportunities for open dialogue between men and women about challenges and potential solutions.
- ▶ Make a greater effort to understand this challenge from those who have lived it.
- ▶ Take an active role and support the pipeline of female talent.
- ▶ Advise and sponsor women and encourage all executives – male and female – to do the same.
- ▶ Decide what actions you will take now that will contribute to a more inclusive – and successful – organization. Commit to making gender diversity your legacy.

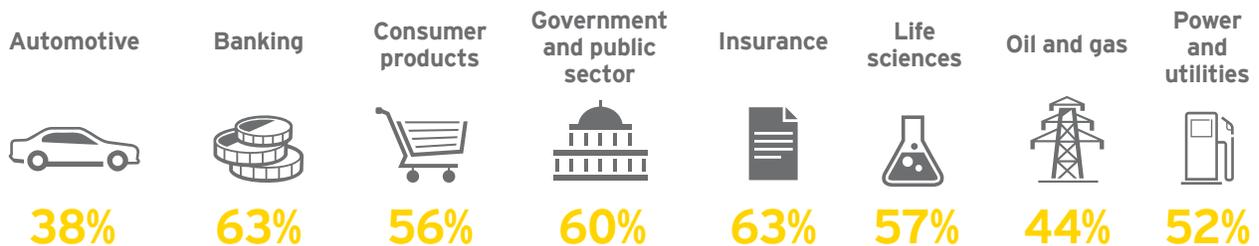
Think leadership teams are diverse?  
Think again.

## The progress disconnect

Different sectors agree on the value of diversity but are making uneven progress toward gender parity.

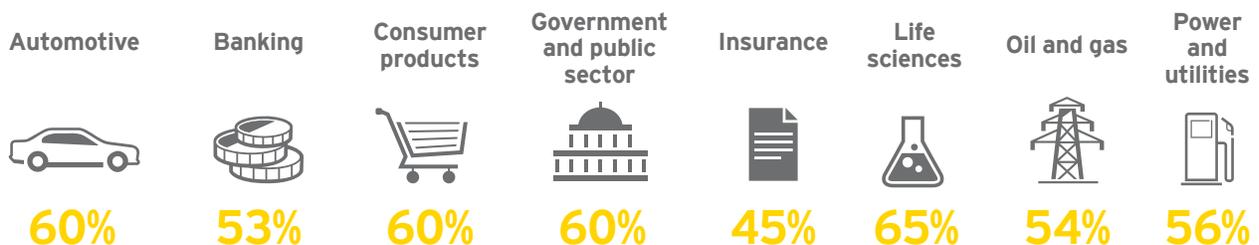
In every sector, almost all respondents believe diversity of thought and experience will be key to navigating the challenges of disruptive innovation. But sectors differ when asked whether they think their own leadership teams are sufficiently diverse in thought and leadership: 60% of public sector leaders believe they do not have sufficient diversity on their leadership teams, compared with just 38% in automotive and 44% in oil and gas organizations. Clearly, sharing leading practices across sectors would offer a wealth of lessons.

### Leaders agree they do not yet have sufficient diversity of thought and experience on their leadership team

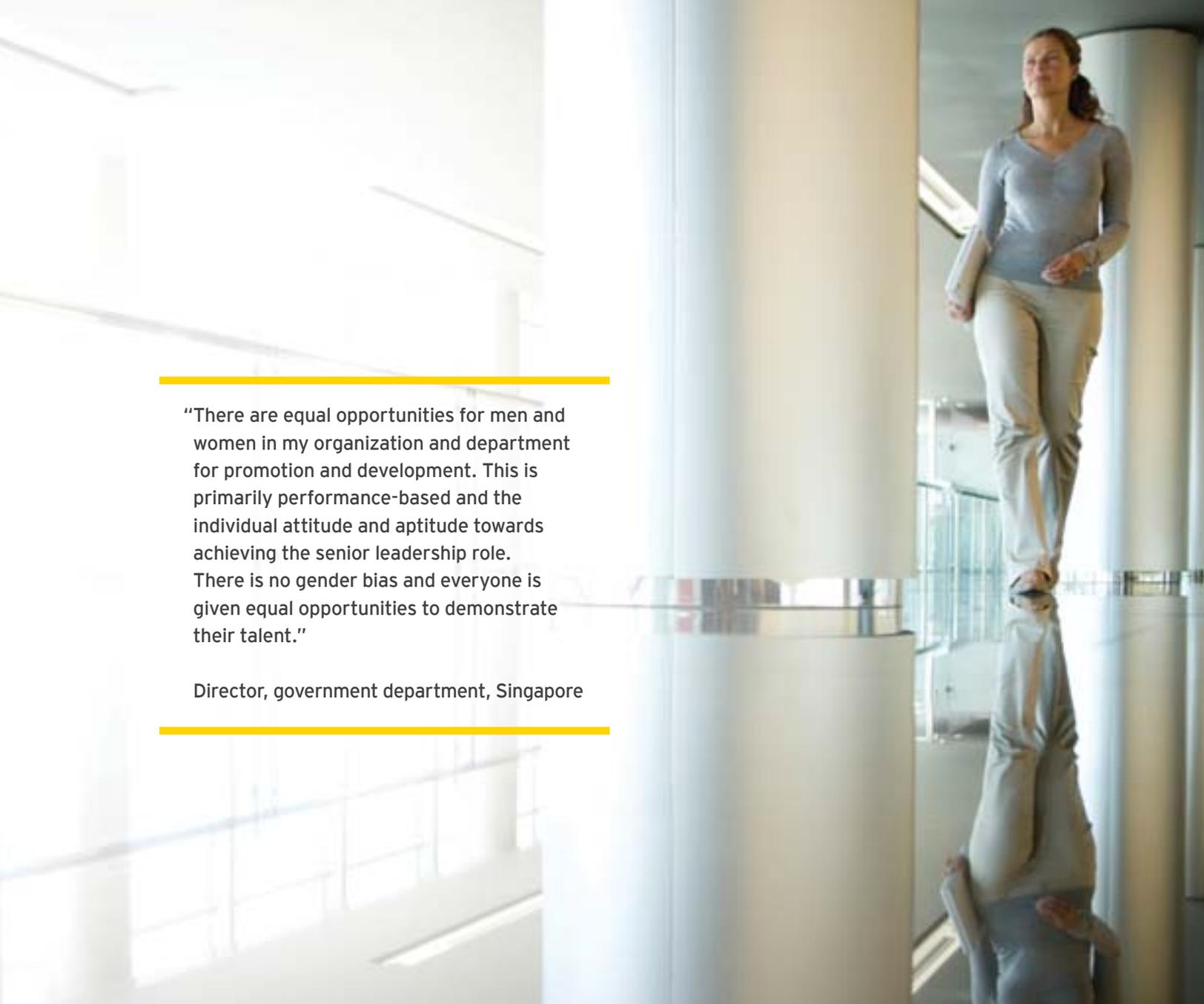


We found further differences in perceptions, actions and progress across sectors. In some areas, government and public sector organizations fare relatively well compared with other sectors. For example, only 45% of insurance respondents in the cross-sector survey said they are effective at promoting women to leadership positions, compared with 60% in the government and public sector. However, while 56% of the leaders surveyed across all sectors said they were effective in identifying future leaders, the equivalent figure for government and public sector respondents was just 49%.

### How effective do business leaders think their organization has been at promoting women in the last five years?



Closing the gender gap requires leaders from all sectors to step up and make hard-edged commitments, backed by meaningful and measurable actions, to deliver a legacy of a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Making gender parity a reality must become a business priority.



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“There are equal opportunities for men and women in my organization and department for promotion and development. This is primarily performance-based and the individual attitude and aptitude towards achieving the senior leadership role. There is no gender bias and everyone is given equal opportunities to demonstrate their talent.”

Director, government department, Singapore

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## For the leadership

### Ask

- ▶ Are you adopting leading practices for gender parity?
- ▶ How does your sector compare with others on gender diversity?
- ▶ What examples can you apply from sectors that are more gender diverse than yours?

### Act

- ▶ Take a holistic, cross-sector view of what's possible and how to achieve it.
- ▶ Adopt the leading practices for achieving gender parity, no matter where they originated.
- ▶ Consider how you and your organization can play an active role in improving your industry's gender diversity.

# Closing the gender gap: it's time to take decisive action

Governments across the world have implemented various measures to address inequalities, introducing equal opportunity legislation and creating protections against discrimination. Many governments, wanting to lead by example, have gone further on gender inequality in their public sector workforces, issuing policies and guidelines for meritorious employment, quotas and targets, and maternity, paternity and childcare provisions. Initiatives such as these have resulted in a relatively high percentage of women pursuing careers in the public sector.

## Gender diversity in the UK Civil Service: creating the climate for change

In early 2016, we interviewed a number of senior civil servants in the UK about gender diversity. We learned about the policies, programs and culture change they had helped bring about in their organizations and their ideas for hastening progress toward gender parity. Below is a summary of our findings.

**Setting targets.** In its 2008 diversity strategy, the Civil Service produced a set of targets for boosting diversity, including the aim that by 2013, 39% of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) should be women. The target was reached, belatedly, in 2015. While there seems to be little appetite for further targets, a new set of diversity objectives has been built into permanent secretaries' performance appraisals. According to Cabinet Secretary, Sir Jeremy Heywood, if these new objectives are met, there "will be a further step improvement in our performance on this agenda."

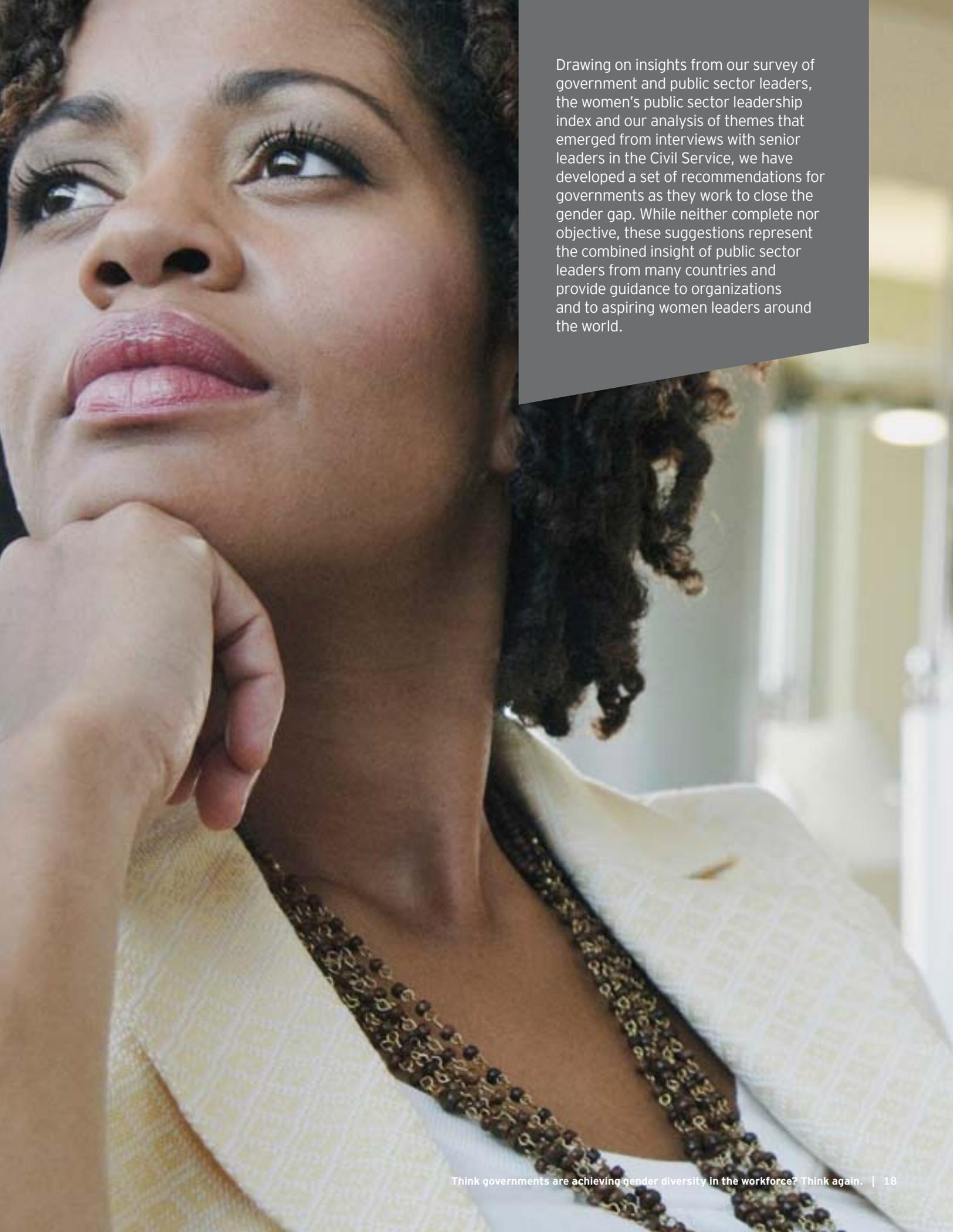
**Changing perceptions of what makes an effective leader.** Sir Gus O'Donnell, former Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service, points to changing perceptions of what makes an effective leader. Today, he believes "we talk about leaders as people with EQ [emotional quotient] as well as IQ; who can bring people on; who can listen as well as talk." Promotion and recruitment systems have evolved in ways that place greater weight on some characteristics in which women tend to be stronger than men.

**Networks and mentoring.** Clare Moriarty's experiences at the Department for Transport and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs convinced her of the value of women's networks – both in preparing and supporting women to win senior jobs, and in identifying and addressing the barriers to progress. Moriarty also helped arrange mentoring and support schemes. "That took off and didn't require much steering," she says. "And we had lots of good grade 6 and 7's who were ready and waiting – so once there was that recognition that we wanted to use their talents, they all came through."

**Tackling unconscious bias.** Interviewees noted that a harder barrier to tackle is the behavioral element – much of which is influenced by our background and perceptions. Derek Jones from the Welsh Department commented that starting in April 2016, everyone sitting on interview panels and all internal job candidates will need to have undertaken unconscious-bias training. The Civil Service is also introducing anonymized job interviewee selection processes, removing names, schools and universities from application forms.

**Developing a pipeline of women leaders.** Jones has also been working to support staff in "feeder" grades. His human resources director meets with high-performing women "to talk about what is expected of the SCS compared with the "executive band" level. "At these sessions, we have specifically addressed some of the barriers to women progressing, including the so-called self-imposed ones. The feedback ... suggests that demystifying the process in this practical, face-to-face way has definitely encouraged some of our female colleagues to apply for roles they otherwise might not have applied for." Martin Donnelly, Permanent Secretary of the Department for International Trade, wrote last year about the importance of "keeping a closer watch on our female talent pipeline; finding supportive buddies for our staff balancing complex jobs and part-time hours; and rolling out unconscious-bias training for all our senior managers."

**Creating a virtuous circle.** If an employer shows that women can make it to the top, more women will apply for jobs, thus creating a greater talent pool from which to draw the next generation of women leaders.



Drawing on insights from our survey of government and public sector leaders, the women's public sector leadership index and our analysis of themes that emerged from interviews with senior leaders in the Civil Service, we have developed a set of recommendations for governments as they work to close the gender gap. While neither complete nor objective, these suggestions represent the combined insight of public sector leaders from many countries and provide guidance to organizations and to aspiring women leaders around the world.

# Recommendations for government and public sector organizations

## Incorporate diversity into planning and strategy

- ▶ Integrate diversity and inclusion into wider +workforce planning to identify and develop the diverse skills, knowledge, experience and different ways of thinking needed to deliver government strategies.
- ▶ Create a compelling business case for diversity and focus on quantifying the benefits.
- ▶ Establish a diversity strategy that, at a minimum, aims to provide equal opportunities for employment and advancement for minority groups, and produce an action plan to implement the strategy.
- ▶ Consider setting quotas and targets for the representation of women on your management board or leadership team.

## Measure progress and increase accountability

- ▶ Collect a wider range of diversity data and report publicly on progress. Employee surveys can also help to pinpoint specific problems and identify appropriate interventions.
- ▶ Increase accountability among top leaders for delivering diversity plans – for example, by building it into their performance objectives.

## Activate leadership support and culture change

- ▶ Focus on changing the culture at the top. Organizations need visible, outspoken leaders – both male and female – who talk openly and repeatedly about the importance of diversity and who challenge inappropriate behaviors and attitudes that undermine gender equality.
- ▶ Develop a pipeline of women leaders by expanding access to role models, mentors and sponsors; adapting recruitment processes; and offering formal leadership programs designed specifically for women.
- ▶ Build a more inclusive culture and tackle conscious and unconscious bias – for example, by providing training that challenges certain behaviors and perceptions.

## Offer practical and flexible support

- ▶ Develop flexible working policies and career options that help women balance work and personal responsibilities at different stages of their lives (e.g., through part-time and home working, job sharing, flexible career paths and structured support networks).

## Share knowledge of best practice

- ▶ Create platforms to showcase and share knowledge, lessons learned and good practices on gender equality across departments and across sectors.

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**“The benefits of gender diversity have become increasingly clear. It makes good business sense. Gender diversity today is probably one of the key market competitive differentiators. The more diverse organizations are, the better they are at being able to win top talent and improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction and decision-making. All of these lead to a more successful organization.”**

**Mildred Tan, EY Asia-Pacific  
Emerging Market Leader**

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**This is work that can, should  
and must begin today.**

## **Recommendations for future women public sector leaders**

### **Take charge of the next phase of your career**

- ▶ Believe in your potential, spread the word about what you want and develop a plan to achieve it. Speak up for yourself and be prepared to take some risks.

### **Seek mentors**

- ▶ Talk to people about their experiences. Find leaders within the organization willing to provide advice and guidance, as well as sponsors to endorse you across wider networks.

### **Expand your network**

- ▶ Consider focused networking to build relationships and connections beyond your existing networks.

### **Play the field**

- ▶ Leaders benefit from a breadth of experience. Avoid tying yourself to a single specialty early on so that you can get a feel for all aspects of the business.

### **Set your own priorities**

- ▶ If leadership is your goal, start thinking about it today. Understand what it takes and what you are willing to sacrifice to achieve it. Know what your priorities are and stick to them, even if it means saying no when you need to.

### **Respect that flexibility goes both ways**

- ▶ Be flexible where and when you can to support your team and organization.

### **Agitate for change**

- ▶ For women leaders, public sector employees and board members, gender equity not only is a social justice issue but also improves productivity, engagement and decision-making.

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**“I am committed and passionate about driving meaningful dialogue on the need for diversity in public sector leadership to be able to effectively respond to unprecedented challenges faced by governments today. In my view the public sector must be a role model for others. That is why in Australia we regularly meet with more than 100 senior public servants through our EY Women in Public Sector Leadership forums to understand and share ways to overcome barriers and create environments where high performing leadership teams flourish.”**

**Lucille Halloran, EY Oceania  
Government and Public Sector Leader**

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## About the survey

As part of EY's commitment to building a better working world, we asked 350 business leaders and 80 public sector leaders about gender diversity in their organizations. The public sector leaders who responded to the survey represented 17 countries across all five continents including Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Asia, North America, Central and South America and Oceania. The participants included secretary generals, permanent secretaries, C-level officers, directors and department heads. Respondents were 65% female and 35% male. Around half (51%) have worked in the public sector for 20 years or more, and 29% have more than 10 years experience. The survey was conducted on behalf of EY by Global Government Forum.

## About Women. Fast forward

**Women. Fast forward** is the EY global platform designed to accelerate the achievement of gender parity in the workplace. By bringing together the experience, resources and knowledge of our professionals, networks and clients, EY aims to build a better working world for women and forge a lasting legacy of growth, increased prosperity and stronger communities throughout the world.

### To learn more and engage around this topic:

Women. Fast forward website –  
[www.ey.com/womenfastforward](http://www.ey.com/womenfastforward)

EY Government & Public Sector website –  
[www.ey.com/citizenstoday](http://www.ey.com/citizenstoday)

Follow us on Twitter:

@EY\_GPS

@EY\_WFF #womenfastforward

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### About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

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### How EY's Global Government & Public Sector can help your organization

Around the world, governments and not-for-profit organizations are continually seeking innovative answers to complex challenges. They are striving to provide better services at lower costs and to create sustainable economic development, a safe environment, more transparency and increased accountability. EY combines private sector leading practices with an understanding of the public sector's diverse needs, focusing on building organizations' capabilities to deliver improved public services. Drawing on many years of experience, we can work with you to help strengthen your organization and achieve lasting improvements. Our Global Government & Public Sector brings together teams of highly skilled professionals from our assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. We are inspired by a deep commitment to help you meet your goals and enhance public value, for today and tomorrow.

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ED None

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