

A 2012 review shows that, in two thirds of the 39 developing and developed countries examined, 40 per cent of union members were women and in 12 countries, women constituted the majority of trade union members (Cobble, 2012). The share of women union members reaches as high as 68 per cent in Latvia and 59.2 per cent in Poland. In 2014, 44.2 per cent of the members of national trade union confederations in Europe were women (Bouaffre and Sechi, 2014).

Women's representation in trade union leadership positions has also been growing, moving away from the 1 per cent found by an ILO study in 2002 (ILO and ICFTU, 2002). For instance, ILO data on women's participation at the International Labour Conference (ILC) reveal an increasing proportion of women representatives. In 2004, 18.7 per cent of the representatives (delegates, substitute delegates and advisors) from workers' organizations were women (ILO, 2010b). In 2015, that proportion increased to 23.7 per cent, while the share of women delegates, usually secretaries general, presidents, vice-presidents and members of the executive boards of trade unions, totalled 15 per cent in 2015 (ILO, 2015i; ILO, 2015j).

Similarly, there has been a substantive increase in women's representation in employers' organizations at the ILC. In 2004, 18.5 per cent of representatives of employers' organizations were women. By 2015, that proportion increased to 26.4 per cent, while the share of women delegates reached 22.9 per cent (ibid.).

In an increasing number of trade unions, women are in leadership positions. In a 2014 survey of trade unions in the European Union (EU), women were found to make up 10 per cent of the presidents, 26 per cent of vice-presidents, 25 per cent of general secretaries, 35 per cent of deputy general secretaries and 36 per cent of treasurers (Bouaffre and Sechi, 2014). In the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, 37 per cent of the leadership positions are held by women, including 29 per cent of the presidents and 14.3 per cent of the vice presidents of the affiliated bodies (Chinguno, 2014).

## **D. Tackling the root causes of sectoral and occupational segregation**

### **1. Encouraging young girls and boys to break gender stereotypes through education and outreach**

While educational attainment may have been a significant factor in lowering segregation in the past, it appears to have little effect on current pervasive forms of segregation (Sookram and Strobl, 2009; UN-Women, 2015). In many countries, the average educational attainment of women is similar to that of men. In 2009, 73 per cent of 184 countries had reached gender parity at the primary or secondary level or at both levels. Gender parity at the primary level has been achieved in 128 countries, and at the secondary level in 72 countries. Globally, girls' enrolment rate is also rising at a greater rate than boys' rates (UNESCO, 2012). In secondary education, the gaps are closing rapidly and have reversed in many countries, in particular in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Eastern Asia. Among the developing countries, girls now outnumber boys in secondary schools in 45 countries. There are also more young women than men in universities in 60 countries and women form the majority of the world's university graduates (World Bank, 2011a). The surge in women's tertiary enrolment is due to changing societal and familial attitudes towards girls' schooling. At the same time, in some instances, young men are more likely than young women to find employment or pursue non-formal education after secondary school (UNESCO, 2012).

Advances in gender parity in education have not helped reduce sectoral and occupational segregation. This could be attributed to the gender differences in the fields of study as opposed to gaps in enrolment. Although gender gaps in tertiary education are closing, women are overrepresented in social sciences, business and law in Arab States, Central and Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Northern America and Western Europe. With the exception of Central Asia and the Arab States, women are underrepresented in the sciences. Within the sciences, women tend to be concentrated in life sciences, where, in the Arab States and Central Europe, they represent over 70 per cent of all graduates. Women are worst represented, however, in computing in all regions, constituting only 21–33 per cent of all graduates (ibid.). A study on the absence of women working in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in the European Union has demonstrated that, although 29 out of 1,000 female graduates have a degree in computing, only four end up working in the field of information and communication technologies (European Commission, 2014b). This suggests the need to move away from an exclusive focus on the expansion of education of women as the best means of combating occupational segregation (Banerjee, 2014).