



Press Release

International Women's Day: global misperceptions of equality and the need to Press for Progress

These are the findings from a special Ipsos survey conducted with International Women's Day to explore attitudes and misperceptions around the "Press for Progress" themes.

Washington DC, March 5, 2018 — To mark International Women's Day, and in the wake of the #MeToo campaign, a new global study by Ipsos in collaboration with International Women's Day across 27 countries highlights the level of concern people around the world have about a number of equality issues.

- Sexual harassment is seen as the biggest equality issue facing women around the world - but half feel that reports of sexual harassment are still ignored.
- People across the world have many misperceptions about equality: we underestimate women's experience of sexual harassment, and are wildly optimistic about when pay and economic equality will be achieved.

In the United States the findings show:

- Much like the rest of the world, Americans agree that sexual harassment (36%) is the biggest issue facing women and girls today. Sexual violence and equal pay come in as the second biggest concerns with 28% agreeing that these are among the most important issues for women.
- American people were relatively accurate when asked to estimate how many of every 100 women have experienced sexual harassment in their adult lives: 60% of women in the United States say they have experienced sexual harassment in their adult lives, yet the average guess among Americans is that 57% of women have. However, men tended to greatly underestimate the prevalence (49%).
- Half of all respondents in the study still think that reports of sexual harassment are ignored – though in the US this falls to 38%. Three in four Americans (78%) support a zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment.
- Americans hugely overestimate the pace of change on pay and economic equality. In the US, people think economic equality will be achieved within 50 years by 2068, however, it has been estimated that economic equality will take 167 years longer (2117). Americans estimate equal pay will be achieved in their country in 2028, however, the predicted year is 2059 – 31 years later.
- Americans also overestimate women's representation in business leadership. We think that 18% of CEOs in the largest 500 companies around the world are women when representation is actually one-sixth of the estimate (3%).
- Seven of ten Americans (70%) say that achieving equality among genders is important to them. When asked if things would work better if more women held positions with responsibilities in government and companies, 61% of Americans agreed
- Close to half of all participants in the study think things have gone far enough when it comes to giving women equal rights (45%). Americans, however, are not so complacent – with only 35% saying things have gone far enough, and 53% disagreeing.

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

Mallory Newall
Director, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
mallory.newall@ipsos.com



Press Release – continued –

Global Findings

Sexual harassment is seen as the top issue facing women...

Three in ten people (32%) globally believe that sexual harassment is the biggest equality issue facing women and girls in their country – the top answer picked out from a long list of equality issues. This figure rises to 58% in Peru, and around half the people in Malaysia (51%) Turkey (51%) Mexico (48%) and India (47%). At the other end of the scale it is considered much less of a problem in Serbia and Russia (7% each) and approximately one in five say it is an issue in Poland (18%), Saudi Arabia (19%) and Japan (20%). The second most picked out issue is sexual violence (28%).

...but people underestimate its prevalence and half still think that reports of sexual harassment are ignored

Even with these high levels of concern about sexual harassment, people underestimate just how common an occurrence this is in each country where we asked this question. For example, 68% of women in Britain say they have experienced sexual harassment at some point – but the average guess by survey participants is that 55% have. The biggest gaps between perceptions and reality are in Sweden (where 81% of women say they have experienced harassment, but the guess is 56%) and France (where 75% say they have experienced harassment, but the guess is 51%).

In contrast, people overestimate women's experience of physical or sexual violence from partners or former partners. Overall, across all countries, the average guess is that 41% of women have experienced this, when the actual proportion of women that say this has happened to them is 25%.

However, the study also finds that in spite of the #metoo campaign and high profile cases shining a light on the issue of sexual harassment, in many countries people still believe that women who come forward will not be taken seriously. Across all 27 countries where the survey was conducted, half (50%) agree that, these days, reports of sexual harassment are generally ignored compared with 40% who disagree. Indeed, in sixteen of the countries, the majority view is still that reports of sexual violence are ignored including Peru, Turkey, Mexico, Chile and South Korea. Conversely, in Japan, Great Britain, Sweden, Australia, Germany, Canada, the US and Hungary more people disagree than agree that reports of sexual harassment are ignored. Despite the high profile public debate on sexual harassment few people say they are talking about the issue with their family; only 15% say they are talking about it 'a lot' compared with twice the proportion (30%) who say they aren't talking about it at all.

Despite this, there is strong support for a zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment; three-quarters (75%) of people around the world feel that this is essential to bring about change in society. Just one in six (16%) disagree. A third, however, shift the responsibility to women; (32%) agree that sexual harassment would end if the women simply told the man to stop, which rises to 57% saying this in India.

Violence, domestic abuse and equal pay are also highlighted as key issues

Sexual harassment isn't identified as the only issue facing women. Around one in five say that physical violence (21%), domestic abuse (20%) and equal pay (19%) are issues. On issues of harassment and violence, there is little difference between the views of men and women. However, women are slightly more likely to cite equal pay as an issue than men (20% vs 17%) as well as balancing work and caring responsibilities (17% vs 13%) and the amount of unpaid work women do e.g. cooking, cleaning and childcare (14% vs 8%).

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

Mallory Newall
Director, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
mallory.newall@ipsos.com



Press Release – continued –

People are wildly over-optimistic about the pace of change on pay and economic equality...

Nearly half of people globally (47%) think that equality between men and women will be achieved in their lifetime compared with 37% who disagree. However, the study shows that we are wildly overoptimistic about the pace of change. In the US, people think women will be paid equally with men by 2028 – whereas, at the current rate of progress, this gap won't be closed until 2059 (a difference of 31 years). In Britain, the difference between perceptions and reality is even wider; people think equal pay will be achieved in 2035 whereas in fact it will be in 2117 (a difference of 82 years). And people are even further out in their estimates of when we will achieve economic equality between women and men across the world. The reality, according to [The World Economic Forum](#), is that this will not be achieved for another 217 years, at the current rate of progress – but the average guess across countries is that it will be achieved in 35 years, with a large number of countries thinking it will be 20 years or less.

...and we hugely overestimate women's representation in business leadership

Misperceptions about reaching equality may be influenced by the fact that we think that aspects of women's lives are better than they actually are. In particular, we hugely overestimate the extent to which women are represented in business leadership; we estimate that, of the world's top 500 companies, one in five (19%) has a female CEO – when the actual figure is just 3%.

People tend to be more accurate though when it comes to estimating the proportion of female politicians in their country. People in Malaysia, India, Brazil and China tend to overestimate the number of female politicians but in the majority of the countries, people actually *underestimate* the number – particularly in Spain, South Africa, Mexico, Belgium, Serbia, Germany and Argentina.

Even so, the majority view around the world is that women need to be better represented; six in ten people (61%) globally agree that things would work better if more women held positions with responsibilities in government and companies compared with 26% who disagree. Only in Russia do more people disagree than agree.

More generally, the vast majority of people (70%) across the world agree that achieving equality between men and women is important to them personally (and this figure rises to three quarters - 74% - of women, compared to two thirds - 66% - of men).

But views are split on whether things have gone far enough in their country when it comes to giving women equal rights, with 45% agreeing with this statement and the same proportion disagreeing. In eleven of the countries, the majority view is that things have gone far enough on equality, and across the countries there are similar levels of agreement among men and women.

Over half agree (55%) that there are actions that they can take to promote equality between men and women while almost three in ten (28%) disagree. People in Peru, Mexico, China and Chile are most likely to agree but significant proportions are less convinced this is the case particularly in Russia, Germany, Sweden and Hungary.

Over half (57%) define themselves as a feminist, someone who advocates and supports equal opportunities for women while three in ten (32%) disagree. There are variations by country, with agreement being highest in South Africa, India, Italy and China and lowest in Japan, Russia and Germany. However, when we ask if people define themselves as a feminist without providing an explanation as to what one is, then levels of agreement fall significantly. Overall just under four in ten (37%) agree compared with nearly half (48%) disagreeing. Only in India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Spain do more people agree than disagree, suggesting that the term feminist still carries fairly negative connotations across the globe.

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

Mallory Newall
Director, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
mallory.newall@ipsos.com



Press Release – continued –

*Commenting on the results, **Kully Kaur-Ballagan, Director at Ipsos MORI** said:*

One of the key requirements for success in achieving equality will be getting the whole public across countries to recognise that we still have a long way to go – but our unique new study shows many of us have a very wrong idea on that.

We underestimate women’s experience of harassment, are wildly optimistic about when economic equality will be achieved and overestimate their representation in business leadership. There is a sense of complacency among many people and in many countries that we’ve already come far enough.

But the survey is not all bad news, far from it: the large majority in all countries see how important an issue it is to address, believe that they can take action to help and many are discussing it in their families. We need to build on this importance to people to press for progress

*Reviewing the findings from a worldwide perspective, **Glenda Stone, Partnerships Director for International Women Day** said:*

The good news is that a focus on gender parity has increased exponentially worldwide. This has been fuelled by a significant increase in coverage of gender issues by mainstream media, an impressive rise in women’s voices via social media platforms, employers actively working to create more diverse and inclusive workplaces, an increase in awareness raising campaigns, and an overall expectation by younger generations for more equal societies.

The challenge is to move towards mass adoption of a “gender parity mindset” to guide behaviour and forge gender-equal perspectives. The survey highlights key areas where women are still marginalised and discriminated. There is no place for complacency. Complacency belittles women.

International Women’s Day provides an important opportunity for all countries and segments of society to celebrate the gains and achievement of women. It also serves as a strong call-to-action to press for progress in every way.

About the Study

In total 19,428 were interviewed between January 26 – February 9, 2018. The survey was conducted in 27 countries around the world via the Ipsos Online Panel system (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the USA).

Approximately 1000 individuals aged 16-64 or 18-64 were surveyed in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain, Great Britain, and the USA. Approximately 500 individuals aged 16-64 were surveyed in Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Turkey.

The precision of Ipsos online polls are calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

Mallory Newall
Director, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
mallory.newall@ipsos.com



Press Release – continued –

The “actual” data for each question is taken from a variety of verified sources. A full list of sources/links to the actual data can be found here: <http://perils.ipsos.com/>

Data are weighted to match the profile of the population. 16 of the 27 countries surveyed generate nationally representative samples in their countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, Serbia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and United States). Brazil, Chile, China, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey produce a national sample that is considered to represent a more affluent, connected population. These are still a vital social group to understand in these countries, representing an important and emerging middle class.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Chris Jackson
Vice President, U.S.
Ipsos Public Affairs
+1 202 420-2025
chris.jackson@ipsos.com

Mallory Newall
Director, U.S.
Ipsos Public Affairs
mallory.newall@ipsos.com

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

Mallory Newall
Director, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
mallory.newall@ipsos.com



Press Release – continued –

About Ipsos Public Affairs

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice made up of seasoned professionals. We conduct strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research.

Ipsos has media partnerships with the most prestigious news organizations around the world. In Canada, the U.S., UK, and internationally, Ipsos Public Affairs is the media polling supplier to Reuters News, the world's leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals. Ipsos Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based market research company. We provide boutique-style customer service and work closely with our clients, while also undertaking global research.

About Ipsos

Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks fourth in the global research industry.

With offices in 88 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across five research specializations: brand, advertising and media; customer loyalty; marketing; public affairs research; and survey management.

Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,782.7 million in 2016.

GAME CHANGERS

« Game Changers » is the Ipsos signature.

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society.
We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.
We deliver with security, speed, simplicity and substance. We are Game Changers.

Ipsos is listed on Eurolist – NYSE-Euronext.
The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index
and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP
www.ipsos.com

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

Mallory Newall
Director, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs
mallory.newall@ipsos.com