

Women, Business and the Law

Seven new economies from East Asia and the Pacific were added to *Women, Business and the Law* including Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The report now monitors 25 economies in the region. At 44, East Asia and the Pacific has the second lowest average regional score in the protecting women from violence indicator, the only region that performs more poorly is the Middle East and North Africa.

Over the past two years, the following reforms have occurred:

Brunei Darussalam improved access to credit information by distributing data from two utility companies.

China introduced three days of paid paternity leave. China also now entitles all women—regardless of age—to 128 days of paid maternity leave. Previously women younger than age 25 were entitled to 98 days of maternity leave whereas women older than age 25 were entitled to 128 days. The economy also improved access to credit information by reporting payment histories, including positive and negative data, from utility companies.

The credit bureau in **Fiji** suspended operations and no longer reports data from utilities and retailers thereby decreasing access to credit.

Indonesia established a small claims procedure in 2015.

Kiribati's new labor code lifted all restrictions on women's employment including restrictions on working at night and in mining. The new labor code also guarantees employees returning from maternity leave the same or an equivalent position.

Malaysia now allows victims of sexual harassment to seek civil remedies.

Mongolia is gradually increasing and equalizing the ages at which men and women can retire and receive pension benefits.

Singapore increased the length of paid paternity leave from 5 to 10 days.

In **Taiwan, China** legislation on early childhood education now applies to children ages two and older. Previously, only children ages four and older were covered. The country also enhanced

access to credit information by starting to report data, both positive and negative data, from retailers.

Timor-Leste introduced a social security system that provides maternity benefits.

Vietnam introduced 5 days of paid paternity leave provided by the government.

Women, Business and the Law measures how laws, regulations and institutions differentiate between women and men in ways that may affect women's incentives or capacity to work or to set up and operate a business. It analyzes legal differences on the basis of gender in 189 economies, covering seven areas: accessing institutions, using property, getting a job, providing incentives to work, building credit, going to court and protecting women from violence. The report is published every two years.

The full report and accompanying datasets are available at wbl.worldbank.org.

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