United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Women in Science

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is the statistical office of UNESCO and is the UN depository for global statistics in the fields of education, science and technology, culture and communication.

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This fact sheet presents the latest UIS data on research and experimental development (R&D) available as of June 2020.

The gender gap in science

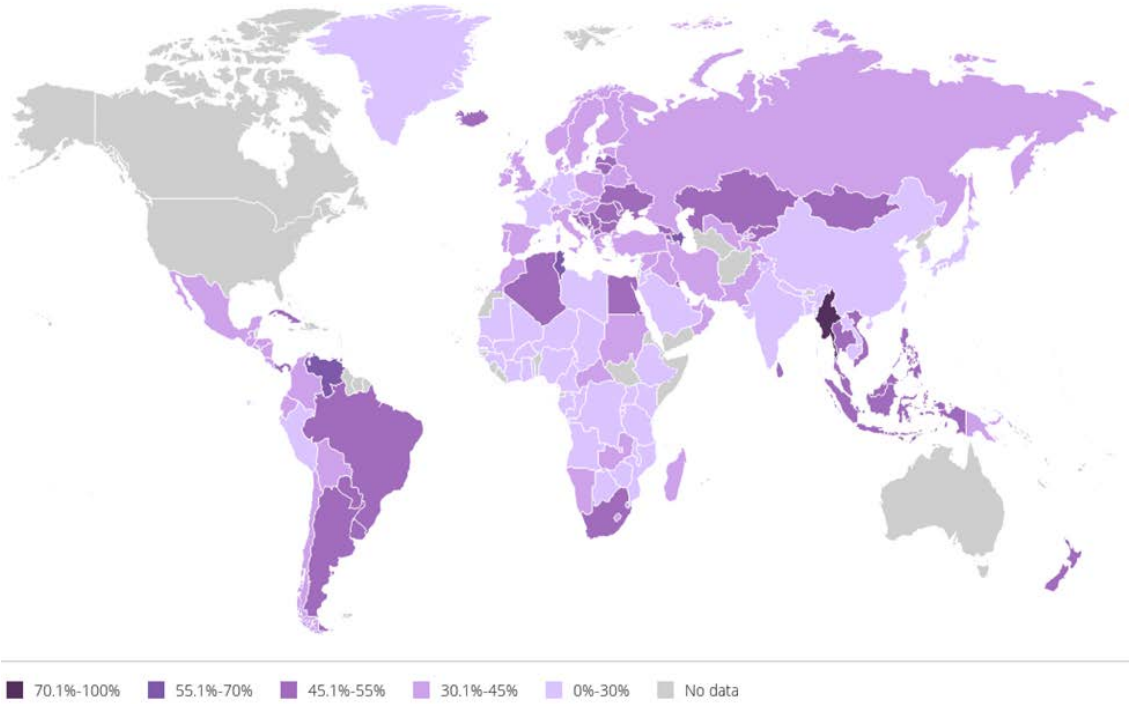
Overall, women account for a minority of the world's researchers. Despite the growing demand for cross-nationally-comparable statistics on women in science, national data and their use in policymaking often remain limited. This fact sheet presents global and regional profiles, pinpointing where women thrive in this sector and where they are under-represented.

Researchers are professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge. They conduct research and improve or develop concepts, theories, models, techniques instrumentation, software or operational methods, in the framework of R&D projects (Frascati Manual, 2015). The global map *(see **Figure 1**)* depicts the share of women in the total number of researchers by country.

Figure 1. The gender gap in science

Women as a share of total researchers, 2018 or latest year available

Notes: Data in this map are based on headcounts (HC), except for Congo, India and Saint Helena, which are based on full-time equivalents (FTE). Data for China are based on total R&D personnel instead of researchers. Data for Brazil are based on estimations.
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, June 2020.



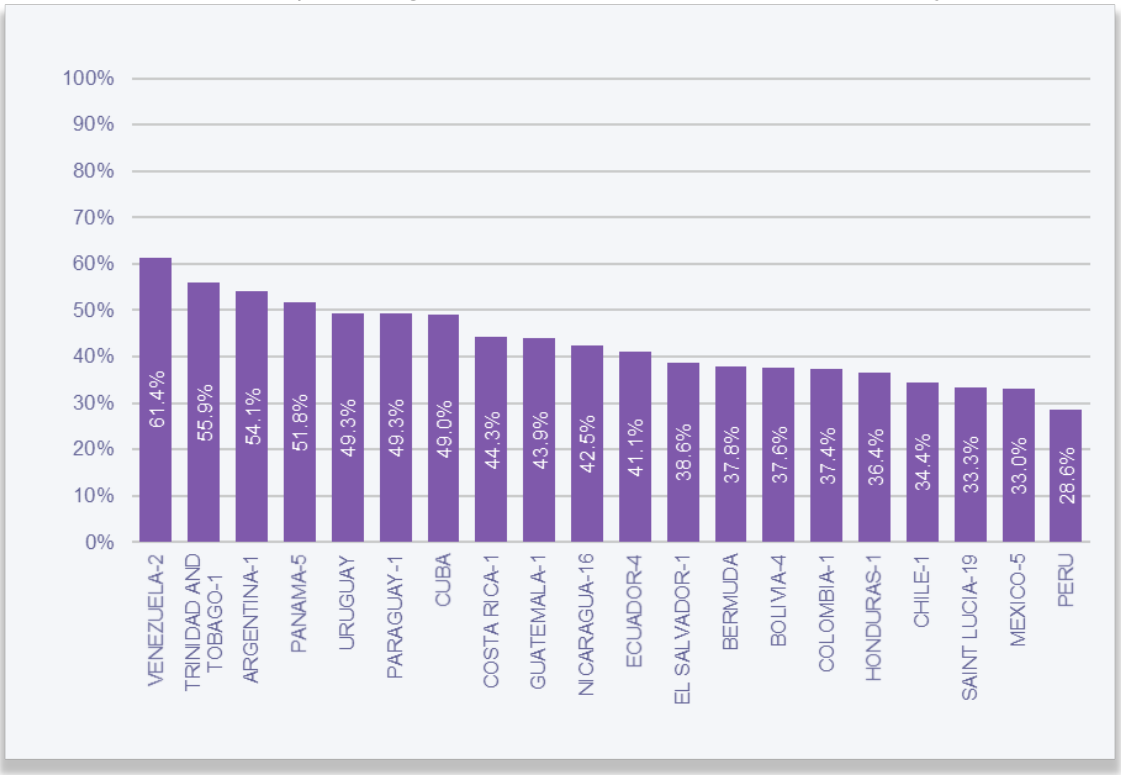
The vast majority of data are presented in headcounts (HC), which are the total number of persons employed in R&D. This includes staff employed both full-time and part-time. The regional averages for the share of female researchers (based on available data only) for 2017 are:

- 48.5 % for Central Asia
- 45.8 % for Latin America and the Caribbean
- 40.9 % for Arab States
- 39.0 % for Central and Eastern Europe
- 32.9% for North America and Western Europe
- 31.1% for sub-Saharan Africa
- **30.0% for World**
- 25.0% for East Asia and the Pacific
- 23.1% for South and West Asia

Figures 2, 3 and **4** illustrate women researchers as a percentage of the total number. Based on headcount data, these figures include part-time and full-time researchers.

Figure 2. Participation of female researchers in the Americas

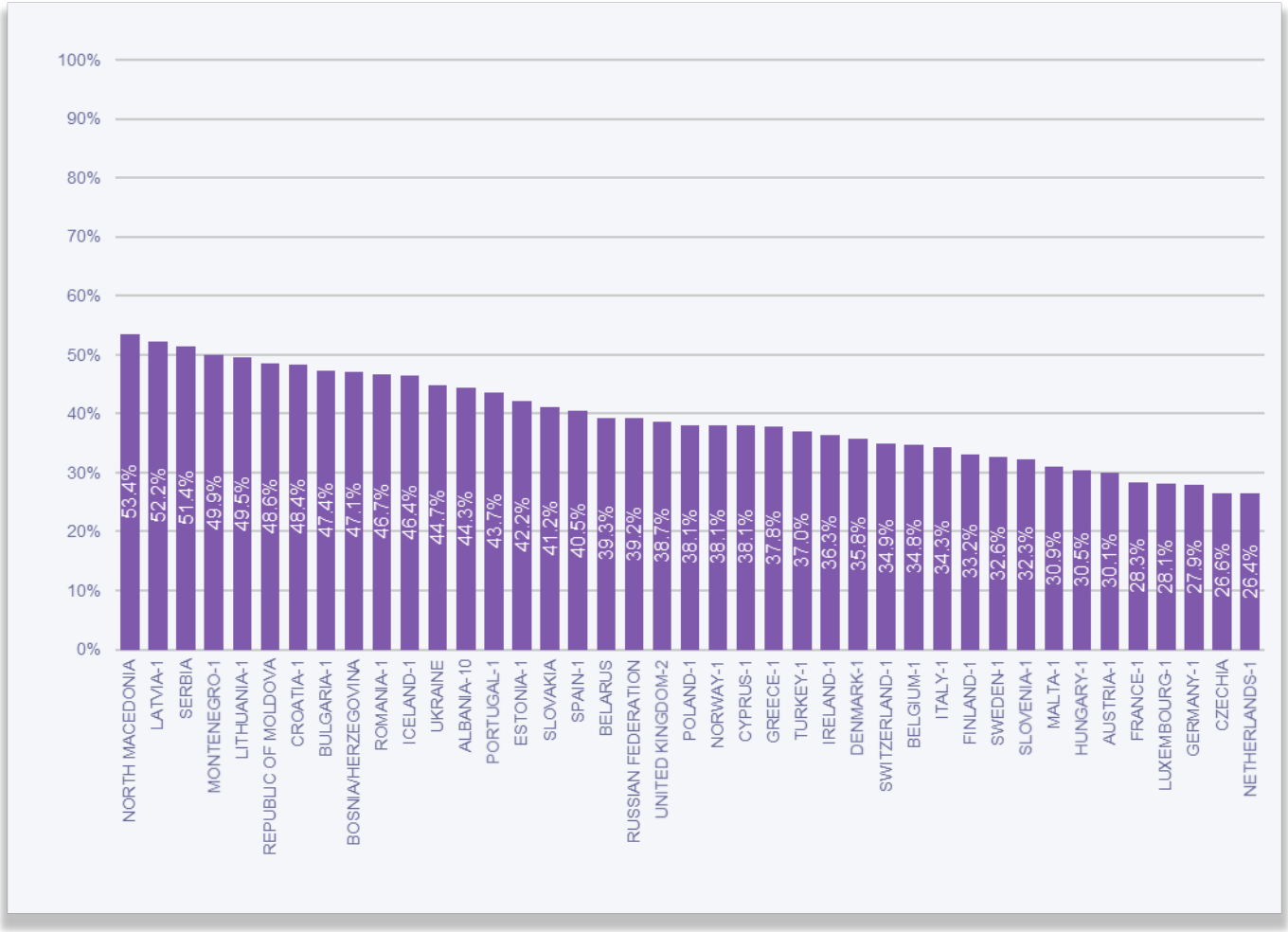
Female researchers as a percentage of total researchers (HC), 2018 or latest year available



Notes: -1=2017, -2 = 2016, -4 = 2014, -5 = 2013, -16 = 2002, -19 = 1999.
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, June 2020.

Figure 3. Participation of female researchers in Europe

Female researchers as a percentage of total researchers (HC), 2018 or latest year available

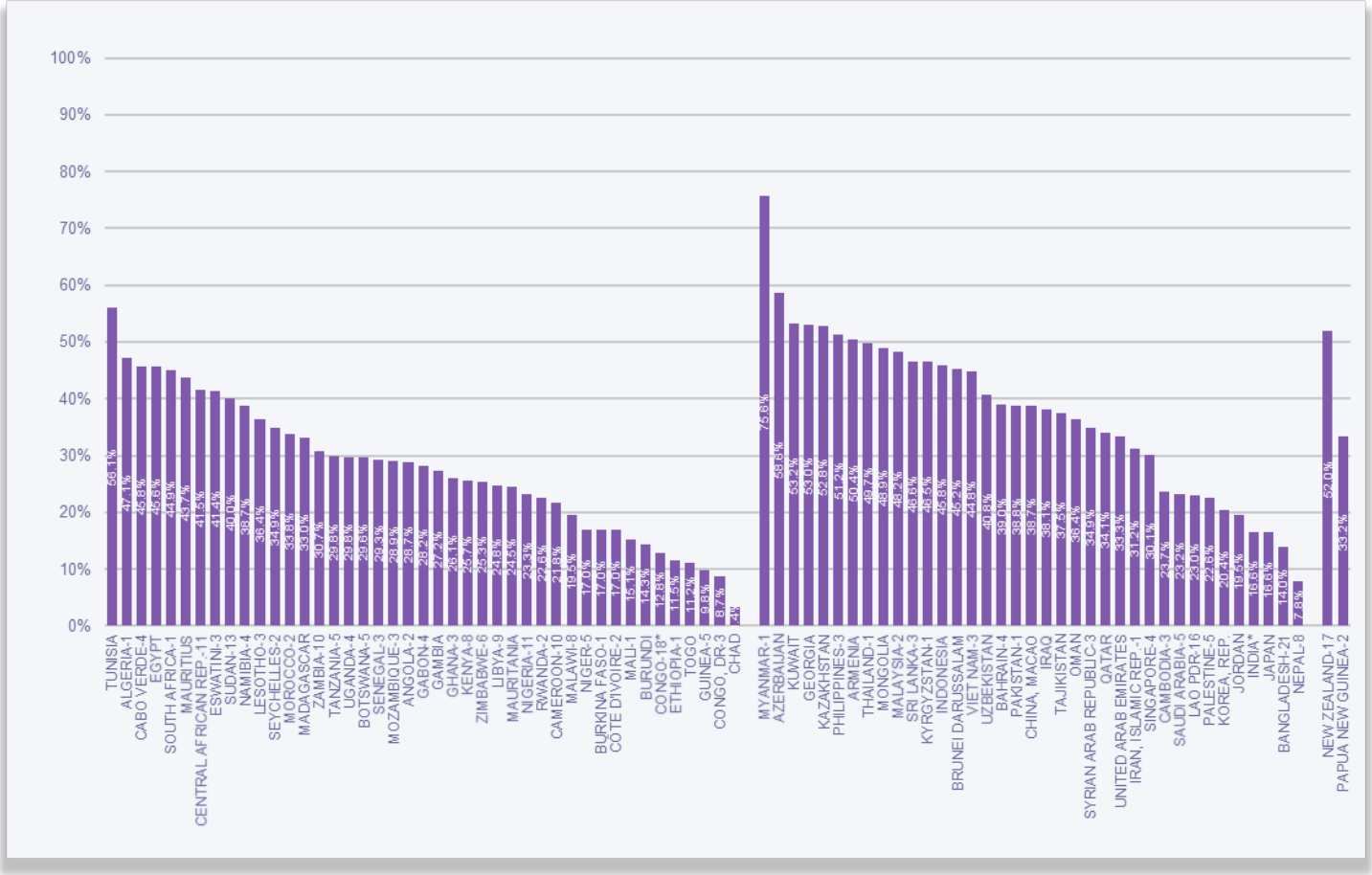


Notes: -1 =2017, -2 = 2016, -10 = 2008.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, June 2020.

Figure 4. Participation of female researchers in Africa, Asia and the Pacific

Female researchers as a percentage of total researchers (HC), 2018 or latest year available



Notes: -1 = 2017, -2 = 2016, -3 = 2015, -4 = 2014, -5 = 2013, -6 = 2012, -7 = 2011, -8 = 2010, -9 = 2009, -10 = 2008, -11 = 2007, -13= 2005, -16= 2002, -17 = 2001, -21= 1997.

* based on FTE data.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, June 2020.

Please consult the UIS website http://uis.unesco.org to access the UIS database and subscribe to eAlerts on the Institute's latest publications, data visualisations and data releases.

For more information on R&D data, please consult the UNESCO eAtlas of Research and Experimental Development at http://on.unesco.org/RD-map

The regional totals/averages presented in this fact sheet are based on UIS regions. Please consult the UIS Data Centre (UIS.Stat) for other groupings.