

Gender equality at work more than 200 years off: WEF

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Women may be shouting louder than ever for equal treatment and pay,

but a report out Tuesday indicates it will take centuries to achieve gender parity in workplaces around the globe.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) report said there had been some improvements in wage equality this year compared to 2017, when the [global gender gap](#) widened for the first time in a decade.

But it warned that these were offset by declining representation of women in politics, coupled with greater inequality in their access to health and education.

At current rates, the global gender gap across a range of areas will not close for another 108 years, while it is expected to take 202 years to close the workplace gap, WEF found.

The Geneva-based organisation's annual report tracked disparities between the sexes in 149 countries across four areas: education, health, economic opportunity and political empowerment.

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Only in the area of economic opportunity did the gender gap narrow somewhat, although there is not much to celebrate, with the global wage gap narrowing to nearly 51 percent.



This year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry may have gone to a female, scientist Frances Arnold, but a new report says women are still significantly under-represented in employment that require science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills

And the number of women in [leadership roles](#) has risen to 34 percent globally, WEF said.

But at the same time, the report showed that there are now proportionately fewer women than men participating in the workforce, suggesting that automation is having a disproportionate impact on jobs traditionally performed by women.

And women are significantly under-represented in growing areas of

employment that require science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills, WEF said.

It decried the particularly low participation of women within the artificial intelligence field, where they make up just 22 percent of the workforce.

Big regional differences

"This gap is three times larger than in other industry talent pools," the WEF statement pointed out.

"In addition to being outnumbered three to one, women in AI are less likely to be positioned in senior roles," it said, stressing the "clear need for proactive measures to prevent a deepening of the gender gap in other industries where AI skills are in increasing demand."



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The situation varies greatly in different countries and regions.

For instance, while Western European countries could close their gender gaps within 61 years, countries in the Middle East and North Africa will take 153 years, the report estimated.

Overall, the Nordic countries once again dominated the top of the table: men and [women](#) were most equal in Iceland, followed by Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Syria, Iraq, Pakistan and finally Yemen showed the biggest overall

gender gaps of the countries surveyed.

Among the world's 20 leading economies, France fared the best, taking 12th place overall, followed by Germany in 14th place, Britain in 15th, Canada in 16th and South Africa in 19th.

The United States continued its decline, slipping two places to 51st, with the [report](#) in particular blaming "a decrease in [gender](#) parity in ministerial-level positions."

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