

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 22, 2009
Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies
www.jims-israel.org

Contact: Corinne Sauer
corinne.sauer@jims-israel.org
054-7650125

Are Israeli women discriminated against when it comes to property rights? Israel ranks 53rd out of 115 countries in the 2009 Gender Equality in Property Rights (GEPR) index

Jerusalem, Israel –The 2009 Gender Equality in Property Rights (GEPR) index released by the Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies (JIMS) and the Property Rights Alliance measures women's rights with regard to property in 115 countries (representing 96% of the world GDP). Israel ranks 53rd, which is a very poor ranking. This shows that women in Israel do not enjoy equal rights in terms of the free possession, enjoyment and disposal of property.

The Gender Equality in Property Rights Index includes five components that measures women's access to land, access to credit, and access to property other than land, inheritance practice and social rights. All the data included in the index are published by the OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base (GID). Israel obtains relatively good marks for inheritance practice and social rights, but ranks very low on the other components. In fact, Israel falls to 73rd place when measuring only equal access to land, credit and property.

Gender equality is usually very strong in developed countries, and non existent in developing countries. In 2009, the top performing country was Finland and the worst ranking was given to Chad. Israel, with a rank of 53, is behind most European and North American countries, and even more surprisingly behind Turkey which ranks 49.

The lack of gender equality in property rights means that women are unable to utilize the economic benefits of such rights and to secure a higher standard of living. It also prevents women from entering certain professions and to shy away from opening businesses.

The gender gap in the proportion of self employed in Israel can be partly attributed to the lack of gender equality in property rights. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 16.7% of men were self employed in 2008 compared to only 6.7% of Israeli women. If women's property rights were closer to the men's, more women would open small businesses and become self employed. Since small businesses are also the major engine of economic growth and job creation, more gender equality would make the entire country better off economically.

Empirical studies have shown that gender equality and women's empowerment are strong determinants in reducing poverty and stimulating growth. A World Bank study by Andrew Morrison Dhushyanth Raju and Nistha Sinha shows that when female earnings increase current poverty is reduced, short term growth increases through higher consumption. And long term growth is stimulated through higher savings.

Empowerment of women also leads to higher female bargaining power for in the household which positively affects children's well-being. As women become more educated and enjoy greater control over household resources, child wellbeing, educational attainment and health increases. This, in turn, leads to breaking the poverty cycle and stimulating growth in the future.

About the International Property Rights Index

The International Property Rights Index provides the public, researchers, and policymakers from across the globe with a tool for comparative analysis and future research on global property rights. The Index seeks to assist underperforming countries to develop robust economies through an emphasis on sound property law. For more information, such as a country-by-country analysis, list of global partner organizations, or the report in its entirety, visit www.InternationalPropertyRightsIndex.org.

About the Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies

The Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies (JIMS) is an independent, nonprofit economic policy think tank whose mission is to promote social progress in Israel through economic freedom and individual liberty. JIMS' website is <http://www.jims-israel.org>.