

# REFORM ACCELERATES ENFORCEMENT LAGS BEHIND

While equality in law remains incomplete, reform activity is progressing—especially where barriers are highest and returns largest. But data show that laws are only enforced half of the time.

## FROM PAPER TO PRACTICE: WBL AS A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL



### PILLAR 1 LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Laws and regulations



### PILLAR 2 SUPPORTIVE FRAMEWORKS

Policies, institutions, services, access to justice, and data



### PILLAR 3 ENFORCEMENT PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions of experts on the extent of enforcement of laws measured



Globally, women enjoy less than two-thirds of the economic rights afforded to men. Even where equal rights exist in the law, the mechanisms to make them effective lag behind—fewer than half of policies and institutions that help women exercise their rights are in place. Legal experts surveyed estimate that laws protecting women’s economic rights are enforced only half of the time.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY WALK OF LIFE

10 topics structured around a woman’s life cycle to assess the global state of her economic rights across key areas, including safety from violence, access to childcare, entrepreneurship, employment protections, asset ownership, and retirement security.



**SAFETY**  
Protection from violence against women



**MARRIAGE**  
Constraints related to marriage and divorce



**ASSETS**  
Equality in property and inheritance rights



**MOBILITY**  
Constraints on women’s agency and freedom of movement



**PAY**  
Conditions affecting occupational segregation and women’s pay



**PARENTHOOD**  
Protections for women’s work after having children

**PENSION**  
Systems shaping the size of women’s pension



**WORK**  
Laws and policies shaping women’s decision to work



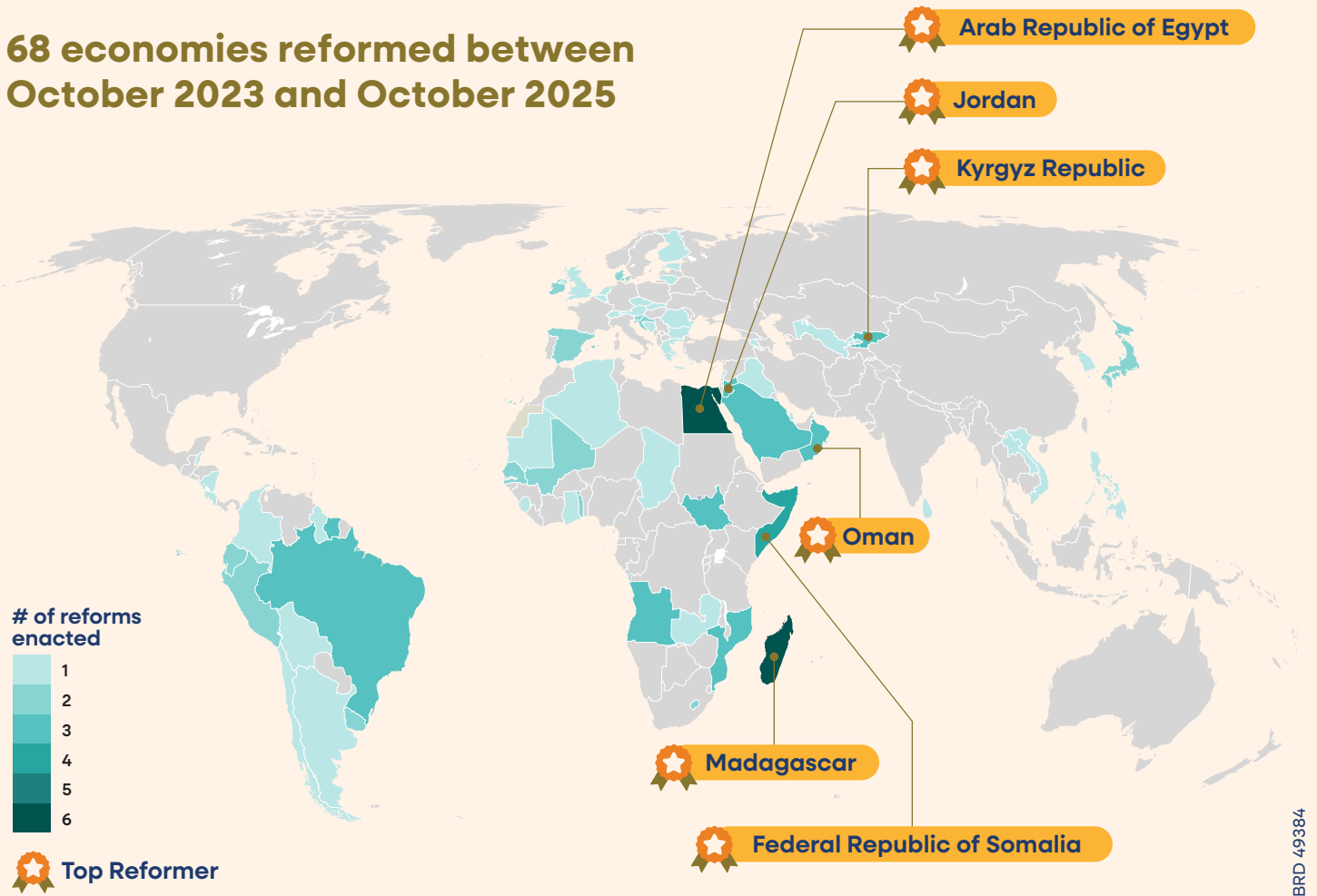
**CHILDCARE**  
Availability, financing, and quality of childcare services



**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**  
Women’s ability to start and operate businesses

# REFORMS GAIN MOMENTUM

68 economies reformed between October 2023 and October 2025



## THE WAY FORWARD



Adopt equal opportunity laws



Invest in implementation and enforcement



Create jobs, growth, and shared prosperity

A flagship data project of the World Bank

Data • Research • Legal Reform Database