

innovations in measuring and monitoring

The achievement of the MDGs will require broad social mobilization, including not only governments and development agencies but also civil society. Women's organizations will need to be vigilant in international and national monitoring of achievements. National level monitoring will be particularly important in assessing progress towards the achievement of Goal 3 and the gender dimensions of all other goals. As we have shown in this report, the selected MDG indicators for Goal 3 do not address many of the dimensions of women's disadvantage and are not equally relevant to all countries. Thus, the values of the Millennium Declaration will need to be translated into additional country-specific targets and indicators related to the women of that country. Numerous UN agencies have been providing support to countries to identify, construct and use such indicators. UNIFEM, for instance,

has worked to strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and of women's organizations to help them use indicators to monitor the fulfilment of commitments and to bring about positive change.

One challenge is to 'liberate' data from the files of national statistical offices. Most national statistical offices have much more data than they make public. As Patricia Alexander, Regional Adviser on Poverty and Statistics for the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has noted, "Now that we are in the computer age, not only is data gathered on forms that record the sex of every respondent, any educated researcher can use these data to link the 'sex' variable to any element in the survey.

PHOTO BY KAWAL KISHORE—REUTERS NEWSMEDIA/CORBIS

Our struggle now is to let advocates know that the data really are there—and to convince governments to make the data available.”

Another challenge is to train more people to be effective users of gender-sensitive indicators in policy advocacy and in monitoring commitments. As Ela Bhatt, the activist and founder of the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in India, has said ‘Statistics in the hands of activists have power.’ UNIFEM is working with ESCAP to build this capacity in a number of Asian countries by developing teams of trainers for each country. Each team will consist of an economist, a statistician from the national statistical office and a gender specialist who will participate in workshops geared to helping them identify issues relevant to women in their country. They will use hands-on exercises based on data they have collected for their country, and then work within their country to build skills in the use of indicators and statistics among national women’s machineries, women’s NGOs and local community groups. Ultimately, however, greater capacity requires greater resources, which is the responsibility of the entire international community, especially the wealthy nations.

IMPROVING NATIONAL STATISTICS

There are many ways to use statistics to construct indicators of progress. But first the statistics must be collected and made available. UNIFEM has for many years supported initiatives to improve the availability of sex-disaggregated statistics at the country and regional level. At the country level, the basis for all national statistics is the census. While in theory this registers the activities of each individual, the way it is carried out in many cases makes women’s activities less visible than men’s. Many women are not considered part of the ‘economically active’ population if they work in the household or the fields. Women may also be asked to name their primary or secondary occupation, rather than to indicate the kind of work that they do to support their families. In many cases, women are not even interviewed; instead, the so-called head of household, usually a man, is asked to describe the work of everyone in the family. The end result is a database that is inherently flawed, compounded by the fact that countries typically do not compile and tabulate all relevant data on a sex-disaggregated basis.

To create a better model, UNIFEM, along with other international agencies, has been supporting projects to ‘engender’ census-taking. In the 2001 census in Nepal and India, it supported training for census takers on ways to probe for gender-sensitive information and aided the Census Bureau’s work to provide sex-disaggregated results and to come up with statistical tables addressing gender issues. The ultimate goal is to ensure that these gen-

der-sensitive methods are institutionalized in the collection and analysis of data from here on. In the Arab States UNIFEM has initiated a project entitled Gender Equality Measured through Statistics (GEMS) in June 2002. This focuses on building gender statistics relating to decision making, the formal and informal economy and violence against women. It will also mainstream gender into the structures of the national Departments of Statistics in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

The statistical system being set up in newly independent East Timor will have a gender perspective built in right from the start, thanks to assistance from UNIFEM and the ESCAP Statistics Division. This is probably the first time anywhere in the world that gender has been built in at the time a national statistical system was created.

Once produced, sex-disaggregated statistics need to be made available in easy to use forms. Following the publication of *Progress of the World’s Women 2000*, UNIFEM assisted in the production of a number of regional and country level statistical reports: *Progress of South Asian Women 2000*; *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition*; and *Status of Nigerian Women and Men 2000: A Statistical Profile*. In addition, *Progress of Brazilian Women* will be published in 2003 with support from the Ford Foundation, and the UNIFEM regional office in the Caribbean will be publishing a new report entitled *Monitoring the Progress of Caribbean Women: Beijing + 5 and Beyond*.

Experiments are also being conducted on providing information about statistics that may be more accessible. In the Philippines, Bobbie Ericta, Head of the Philippines National Statistical Office, runs a radio programme, in which she includes segments on gender-based statistics. She reports a strong following for the programme, particularly among women, even though it airs at six in the morning. In Brazil, a CD ROM, ‘The Condition of Women in Brazilian Society: Labour and Education,’ was produced by the Instituto Brasileiro de Administraç o Municipal (IBAM), with the support of the German Cooperation Agency (GTZ), the European Commission and UNIFEM. The CD, which maps out the situation in more than 5,000 municipalities, has been distributed to 509 municipalities in Brazil, and to national, state and municipal official women’s machineries. Similar exercises are being carried out in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

CREATING ALTERNATIVE INDICATORS AND INDICES

Once indicators are available, they need to be put to use, documenting progress — or the lack of it — in improving women’s lives. Many initiatives are under way in this area, through international,

Table 13: Index of Fulfilled Commitments

Countries	Thematic Areas	Citizen Participation and Access to Power	Economic Autonomy and Employment	Women’s Health and Reproductive Rights	Overall
Chile	1995	20.78	80.71	66.63	61.87
	1998	25.00	75.18	69.12	61.64
Ecuador	1995	9.37	75.39	49.49	49.98
	1998	15.78	73.32	48.68	50.38
Paraguay	1995	11.27	72.70	58.20	52.37
	1998	35.65	69.52	67.77	60.36
Uruguay	1995	8.13	71.20	21.29	38.15
	1998	13.94	72.19	44.66	49.72

Source: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) 2003, *Index of Fulfilled Commitments* (forthcoming), Santiago, Chile

regional and national agencies as well as through civil society groups that create and monitor their own indicators.

CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES

Civil society groups are creating indicators that can be used not only to enhance the picture provided by government statistics but also to prod governments to meet their commitments to women.

Women’s organizations in many countries in Latin America are working to construct measures of how far their governments have fulfilled the commitments they have made to women. With technical support from FLACSO (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales), and financial support from UNIFEM, Indices of Fulfilled Commitments have been constructed in Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay. Work on an Index is proceeding in Argentina, Colombia and Peru and is in the planning stages in Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela.

Three thematic areas have been chosen for each country’s index:

- Citizen participation and access to power
- Economic autonomy and employment
- Women’s health and reproductive rights

Within each theme, the commitments made by governments at UN conferences and in their national plans of action relating to women are translated into quantitative targets, and indicators of progress towards them are identified. The degree of fulfillment of each target is measured. Then the women involved in the initiative agree on how to weight the individual components to create an index for the percentage of the target achieved in recent years for each thematic area as well as for the three themes combined. (For more details of the methods used to produce the figures, see FLACSO, 2001; 2003). The strength of this method is that it reflects the priorities of women’s organizations in each

country: They decide which commitments to prioritize, how to translate these into targets and how to measure progress towards the targets.

Results for Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay are shown in Table 13. Care must be taken in interpreting this data because the women in each country may have made different choices about how to construct their index. However, we can conclude from the table that in 1998 none of the four governments had yet fulfilled all the commitments of greatest priority to the women in those countries. The Governments of Chile and Paraguay were doing better than those of Ecuador and Uruguay in fulfilling their commitments. In all four countries fulfillment of commitments in relation to citizen participation and access to power was lowest, and it was highest in relation to economic autonomy and employment.

Women are now beginning to use the Indices of Fulfilled Commitments to lobby for change. In Chile, the Grupo Iniciativa Mujeres brought the results of their work to the attention of women leaders, presented them to women in parliament and discussed them with ministers and officials. They also mounted a publicity campaign in the press. Their message was that progress was too slow overall and that at current rates, it would be 2036 before all the goals were achieved. As a result of their efforts some changes were made in programmes for women:

- Quotas were introduced to increase the amount of credit per capita given by the government to rural women.
- Quotas were introduced to increase the number of women receiving tax-exempt skills-training.
- Legal changes were made to allow voluntary sterilization at women’s request.
- Legal changes were made to allow vasectomy to be used as a sterilization method.

Teresa Vald s, FLACSO coordinator of the effort, points out that women now see the impor-

Table 14: Changes in Gender Gaps, 1990-2000

	Illiteracy (15-24 Years)	Unemployment	Primary School Enrolment (Gross)
No. of Countries	87	133	163
Deterioration	13.5%	30.3%	20.7%
Improvement	38.3%	43.8%	32.9%

Adapted from Social Watch 2002

tance of statistics for political activism: "Women tell me that statistics can be really interesting. Our experience shows that indicators really can help to bring about change for women."

Social Watch is another civil society group in Latin America that has been producing innovative indicators to monitor women's progress. Based at the Instituto del Tercer Mundo in Uruguay, and building on an international network of citizens' groups in over 40 countries, Social Watch has for several years been producing reports on social progress, including women's, charting life expectancy, reduction in illiteracy and net enrolment of girls in primary school. In 2002 a new chart was introduced focusing on gender gaps rather than absolute levels of women's capacities and opportunities. The indicators chosen were the female to male ratio in youth illiteracy rates, unemployment rates and primary school enrolment rates. The choice does not appear to have been directly linked to monitoring the MDGs. Social Watch provides a country by country chart and also a global summary table, the results of which are shown in Table 14.

The table shows that, in the case of illiteracy, for example, 38.3 per cent of the 87 countries for which data was available experienced a reduction in the gender gap, meaning that women approached parity with men, while the gap increased in 13.5 per cent of countries. In all three areas, the gender gap has decreased in more countries than it has increased. Unfortunately there is no discussion of the extent to which the narrowing of gaps represents a true improvement of women's situation or merely an equalizing of deprivation. In the case of illiteracy, for example, it is difficult to compare the figures compiled in this report with Social Watch's figures to see if women's situation has improved, because Social Watch tracks illiteracy and we track literacy. However, a deterioration in the gender gap for illiteracy can be consistent with young women becoming more literate worldwide, as indicated in our work.

Social Watch has a number of other indicators that are important for monitoring progress for women. In particular, it provides indicators of progress or regression in access to the basic public services that are so important in lightening the bur-

den of unpaid care work:

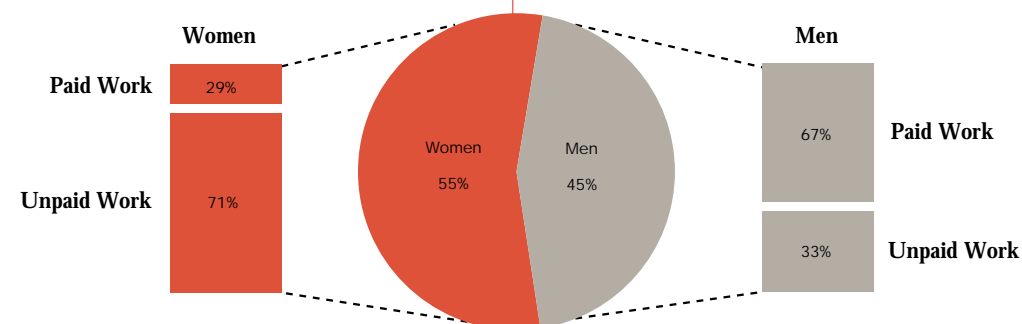
- percentage of population with access to health services
- number of pregnancies attended by trained health personnel (per 1,000 live births)
- percentage of deliveries attended by trained health personnel
- percentage of population with access to sanitation
- percentage of population with access to safe water

NEW REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INDICATORS AND INDICES

There are several important ongoing efforts to create new databases in various regions. In Africa, the UN Economic Commission for Africa is planning a new set of indicators, the Gender Status Index and an African Women's Progress Scoreboard, both of which will be published in the *African Women's Report* in 2003. These will contain data collected directly from the national statistical offices of African countries, and will thus be able to make use of a wider range of data than is generally supplied by UN agencies. The Gender Status Index will combine about 20 indicators of gender gaps in social, economic and political power, giving each equal weighting, and thus implicitly judging that all of the gender gaps measured are of equal importance. In this respect the Index is different from the Indices of Fulfilled Commitments being developed in Latin America, which give different weighting to the components of each Index according to priorities agreed upon by various civil society groups.

The African Gender Status Index is also different in that it does not refer to the achievement of particular goals. Instead, it will have some similarities to the Gender Sensitive Human Development Index in the Human Development Reports. Like those, its usefulness will come from comparing African countries both at one point in time and over time. As measured by the Index, the country with the highest score will be the one with the greatest gender equality. If the score on the Index rises, it will signal an increase in gender equality. However, it will not be possible to see what factors are responsible for high and low scores, nor the

CHART 6: Distribution of Total Hours Worked in Cuba, by Sex, 2001



Adapted from Teresa Lara Junco, General Coordinator of the Cuban Time-Use Survey

extent to which the scores represent equality in deprivation or equality in prosperity, unless the underlying tables of indicators are also published. The scoreboard, which will monitor progress towards improvements in law, policies and budget allocations, will be constructed with input from NGOs.

There are many other examples of government offices helping to create new indicators that will broaden their knowledge of women's status. UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNIFEM recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kenyan Government to support the creation and dissemination of data and statistical information for development. In Central America and Mexico UNIFEM has supported the creation of a national statistical system (SISESIM) that monitors the implementation of national programmes for equal opportunities and the advancement of women. In Mexico the SISESIM data comparing school drop-out rates and completion of studies by boys and girls showed that girls were dropping out at a higher rate than boys. It led to the recognition that poor families needed extra assistance to keep girls in school. As a result PROGRESA, a government anti-poverty programme, now provides larger schooling grants for girls than for boys.

UNIFEM has also been championing time use surveys as a means of collecting expanded data about women's work. Time use, unlike share of employment, gives a more complete picture of women's work, whether in the home or outside it. The Cuban statistical office, with support from UNIFEM, as part of a larger UNDP project funded by the Italian government, conducted its first national time use survey in 2001. The results are presented in Chart 6. They show that women spend less time than men on paid work and more time than men on unpaid

work. But when women's total hours of paid and unpaid work are added up, they spend many more hours working than men do.

Another region where time use studies are relevant is sub-Saharan Africa, where they can reveal some of the hidden costs of HIV/AIDS. UNIFEM, in collaboration with the Tropical Institute of Community Health and Development (TICH) in Kenya, has just concluded the first phase of a multi-country participatory research project on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS care policies and practices in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. The study established that women carry the heavier burden of both unpaid and paid care (UNIFEM/TICH 2002).

Also in East Africa UNIFEM is sponsoring innovative district level surveys such as the 'gender and household food economy assessment' that was conducted in the Hiran region of Somalia. The survey collected sex-disaggregated data from households on income, priority expenditures, coping strategies and access to and control over resources. It showed that although women are the main actors in production and marketing, they do not have full control over their income. Indeed, about 10 per cent of their income goes towards their male partners' daily allowance for khat (an addictive substance used in many parts of the Horn of Africa). The study contributed to advocacy work within the Food Security Network for Somalia, which began targeting women in food security and livelihood programmes. The Network has also decided to use the survey as a prototype for its future work. The findings have also been used to inform the modified UN Joint Action Recovery Programme for Somalia.

Statistics are also an important part of the effort to end violence against women. They provide essen-

Table 15: Gender and Poverty in Latin America

Country	Area	Proportion Below Poverty Line M=male F=female	Females per 100 Males Below Poverty Line
Argentina	Urban	23.8 (M) 23.6 (F)	99.3
Bolivia	Urban	48.6 (M) 48.2 (F)	101.4
	Rural	79.4 (M) 81.6 (F)	102.8
Brazil	Urban	33.0 (M) 32.6 (F)	99.5
	Rural	54.8 (M) 55.6 (F)	101.6
Chile	Urban	20.6 (M) 20.6 (F)	101.0
	Rural	26.4 (M) 28.8 (F)	109.1
Colombia	Urban	48.5 (M) 48.1 (F)	100.4
	Rural	57.5 (M) 60.7 (F)	105.8
Costa Rica	Urban	16.8(M) 19.2 (F)	114.4
	Rural	20.8(M) 23.8 (F)	114.5
Ecuador	Urban	63.1 (M) 63.3 (F)	102.8
El Salvador	Urban	38.1 (M) 39.0 (F)	101.3
	Rural	64.9 (M) 65.4 (F)	100.8
Guatemala	Urban	45.7 (M) 45.4 (F)	101.0
	Rural	69.8 (M) 70.0 (F)	100.4
Honduras	Urban	66.6 (M) 65.4 (F)	99.3
	Rural	81.0 (M) 81.5 (F)	100.8
Mexico	Urban	38.7 (M) 38.7 (F)	101.0
	Rural	58.3 (M) 58.6 (F)	100.6
Nicaragua	Urban	63.4 (M) 64.5 (F)	101.7
	Rural	77.4 (M) 76.6 (F)	99.0
Panama	Urban	25.8 (M) 26.6 (F)	103.1
	Rural	40.4 (M) 43.6 (F)	107.9
Paraguay	Urban	49.7 (M) 47.4 (F)	97.1
	Rural	73.2 (M) 74.4 (F)	101.9
Dominican Republic	Urban	33.9 (M) 36.9 (F)	110.2
	Rural	37.7 (M) 43.3 (F)	115.0
Uruguay	Urban	9.7 (M) 9.4 (F)	97.3
Venezuela	Total	48.6 (M) 50.0 (F)	104.3

Source: ECLAC, *Demographic Bulletin*, July 2002, Tables 6a and 6b

tial information on incidence as well as which types of interventions work best. There are several important research projects going on that will develop useful statistical information on violence against women. The World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children in Canada, and the UK-based Centre for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) are all conducting studies to estimate the personal, social and economic costs of violence against women. In addition, the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and Statistics Canada are coordinating the International Violence Against Women Survey, which will utilize a standard questionnaire and rely largely on the network and infrastructure of the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) that is used in more than 70 countries around the world. The World Health Organization maintains a database on intimate partner violence and physical violence against women. It has just completed one groundbreaking study, the *World Report on Violence and Health*, and is in the midst of a multi-country study on violence against women.

ECLAC has also been a leader in developing statistical models and indicators that can be compared across regions. With support from UNIFEM, it is currently working on a Gender Statistics and Indicators model to measure the incidence and evolution of violence against women. Research will focus on women aged 15 years and older, and document various social and economic factors such as age, economic participation, family structure of the household, education level and area of residence. The hope — and expectation — is that all national institutes of statistics will participate in generating information. In the Commonwealth of Independent States, the UNIFEM regional office is supporting a nine-country survey on violence against women, covering Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

GENDER AND POVERTY

For Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC has produced a set of gender-sensitive indicators, published in the July 2002 edition of the *Demographic Bulletin*. The section on gender and income poverty is particularly noteworthy. Currently, there is no international database that allows us to monitor the extent of women's poverty, and the degree to which women are poorer than men. The MDG indicators for Goal 1, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, are not designed in a gender-sensitive way. The ECLAC indicators are thus innovative in providing gender-sensitive information on a systematic basis

for the whole region. ECLAC also goes beyond disaggregation by sex of household head to develop new indicators of the kind called for in *Progress of World's Women 2000*.

For example, in selected countries of Latin America, the indicators assess the proportions of males and females in households below the national poverty line and the number of females in households below the poverty line for every 100 males below that line. The key results are presented in Table 15. The proportion of females below the poverty line is higher than that of males in the majority of cases (taking urban and rural as separate cases). However, in about half the cases where the proportion in poverty is higher for women, men's proportion is not significantly lower.

In actual numbers, there are more poor females than poor males in the majority of cases reported, although once again, in at least half the cases the numbers of females and males living in poverty are quite close. These figures suggest that the feminization of poverty, in which a disproportionate number of females live in households below the poverty line, is present in some countries in Latin America but by no means all. It is somewhat more prevalent in rural than in urban areas. Although there is a commonly held belief that women often comprise up to 70 per cent of those living below the poverty line, this does not hold true for Latin America. If it did, there would be more than 200 females per 100 males below the poverty line. The highest figure recorded in Table 15 is 115 in rural Dominican Republic.

The World Bank has recently released an analysis of women's equality and their participation in the labour market in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has similar findings to Table 15. *Challenges and Opportunities for Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Ruiz Abril 2003) shows that "in spite of significant progress over the past 20 years, gender inequalities continue to be an obstacle for the full development of the countries in the region," according to Mar a Valeria Peña, the leader of the World Bank's Gender Unit for the region.

The study shows that even though women's participation in the formal economy continues to increase, their share remains much lower than men's and they earn less than men. The situation is particularly difficult for women in rural areas, who are among the poorest and must cope with a high number of dependents, high fertility rates and lack of access to land. Landlessness in fact is on the increase in several countries, such as Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua according to the Bank. Mexico remains the country with the biggest gender gap in land ownership: Women represent only 21 per cent of the property owners under land reform.

Table 16: Gender and Poverty in India

Year	Location	Percentage of Poor Among	
		Adult Males	Adult Females
1983	Rural	36.7	38.7
1983	Urban	31.4	34.9
1993/1994	Rural	23.5	24.9
1993/1994	Urban	26.5	29.5

Source: Banerjee, 2000, using data from the Indian national consumption expenditure surveys

Nirmala Banerjee, a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Social Sciences in India, where many of the world's poorest women live, has conducted research similar to that done by ECLAC. She has reported that in both rural and urban India, a higher proportion of the adult female population lives below the poverty line than of the adult male population. And even though there was a reduction in both male and female poverty incidence between 1983 and 1993, women remained disproportionately poor (see Table 16).

There is much about women's poverty that is not captured by such statistics. Poor women and girls who are unable to survive on their own may have to seek shelter with relatives in households living above the poverty line. They may be working as live-in servants in households that are above the poverty line. If they have little or no income of their own, or work as live-in servants, their lives may lack dignity, autonomy and security, even though they have enough to eat and adequate shelter. They may be particularly vulnerable to violence. The next goal for those developing statistics and indicators will be to develop ones that help us understand these wider dimensions of gender, poverty and violence. The Women and Development Unit at ECLAC is working on this, and among the indicators they plan to produce is one on the proportion of women with no cash income of their own.