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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”

Building the evidence and monitoring results: gender statistics and indicators

Chair’s summary

1. On 17 March 2015, the Commission on the Status of Women convened an interactive panel discussion on the topic of “Building the evidence and monitoring results: gender statistics and indicators”. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Christine Loew, Vice-Chair of the Commission, Switzerland. The Executive Secretary of the National Institute for Women in Mexico, Marcela Eternod Arámburu, moderated the discussion. The panellists were: the Chief of the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch of the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Dr. Keiko Osaki-Tomita; Statistician at the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, Nguyen Thi Viet Nga; the Statistician-General of South Africa, Pali Lehohla; and Senior Statistician and Economist in the Development Data Group, World Bank, Masako Hiraga. Contributions to the discussion included interventions from 30 Member States and one regional group and one civil society intervention.
2. Participants in the interactive panel discussion identified a number of achievements, including good practices and lessons learned, challenges and gaps in the generation, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics in the context of monitoring and accelerating the implementation of the Platform for Action and the future post-2015

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development agenda, and highlighted priority areas for the future.

Gender statistics as a priority for accelerated implementation

3. Participants unanimously confirmed the importance of high quality, comprehensive and regular gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Several participants emphasized the need for data to inform policy and decision making on gender equality, and for evidence-based planning, programming and evaluation. Examples were provided where data for specific areas had influenced policy development by helping to identify where to focus initiative, such as in the areas of girls' education and vocational training of women in tertiary and industrial sectors. According to participants, gender statistics and indicators play a crucial role in monitoring and driving progress towards gender equality, where an example demonstrated how data informed interventions to drive down rates of child and maternal mortality.
4. Participants recognized the urgency of increasing the quality, coverage and availability of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data to effectively monitor progress on gender equality, women's empowerment and the human rights of women and girls in the post-2015 development agenda. There was widespread support for a standalone goal on gender equality in the new framework; with equal emphasis given to the importance of gender mainstreaming throughout the agenda and across targets.

Increasing efforts to institutionalize gender statistics

5. Participants emphasized the central role of national statistical offices for leading the production, coordination, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics. National statistical offices were recognized for their critical role in maintaining official, consistent and regularly collected data to monitor the status of men and women, inform policy formulation across sectors and track results on gender equality over time. Countries highlighted specific initiatives to build gender-responsive statistical systems such as the establishment of gender statistics sections or focal points, the inclusion of gender statistics as a priority in national statistical plans and the development of specific policies and guidelines on the production of gender statistics.
6. Participants recognized that the production, analysis, dissemination and use of gender statistics requires strong partnerships and collaboration at international, regional, national and decentralized levels across sectors and with civil society and women's organizations. Several examples were provided of mechanisms to support collaboration, for example, bi-lateral arrangements among key ministries, such as national gender equality machineries and national statistical offices; the establishment of national commissions, inter-agency groups, councils or task forces on gender statistics; and the establishment of multi-stakeholder observatories.
7. Participants noted the importance of partnerships at the regional and international level to facilitate technical exchange and sharing of tools and methodologies, including through the Inter-agency Expert Group on Gender Statistics of the United Nations Statistical Division and the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Initiative.

Innovations in the collection, production and dissemination of gender statistics

8. A number of countries reported efforts to regularly report on national gender indicators and the establishment of databases and other central repositories. In many cases such efforts are aligned with regionally or internationally agreed frameworks, such as the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the minimum set of gender indicators. Governments have collected data through a variety of instruments, including the Demographic and Health Surveys, Living Standard Measurement Surveys, the World Health Organization Survey on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women, the Gender-based Violence Information System, and labour force surveys among other dedicated surveys, or research on targeted social and economic issues. Many participants highlighted specific areas of innovation in producing gender statistics such as violence against women, labour force, time-use, work-life balance, asset ownership and women's experiences of poverty.
9. Efforts to disseminate data on gender equality have increased, with several participants providing examples of monitoring reports, annual report cards and gender-based factsheets, and publications containing data on a range of topics. Participants also gave examples of the development of specialized databases in specific areas of gender equality such as the representation of women in public life, economics, and decision-making.

Gaps and challenges in gender statistics

10. Participants emphasized that while progress has been made since the Fourth World Conference on Women in the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics primarily in the areas of health, education and to some extent in regard to labour force participation and violence against women, significant gaps and challenges persist.
11. A number of countries underscored the importance of improving the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of administrative data, qualitative data, and survey data on critical gender equality issues. For example, participants raised concern over the lack of gender statistics related to the economy, with references to macroeconomics, intra-household allocation of resources and power, unpaid care work and assets; women's decision-making in public and private domains; access to and quality of services; and time use. Participants also highlighted challenges in ethically measuring all forms of violence against women and girls in different settings, noting the need for new data that could specifically inform efforts to prevent violence. According to participants, greater attention must be paid to the underlying drivers of inequality across social, economic, civil and political spheres of life with participants emphasizing the urgent need to capture and monitor trends in discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes. The lack of data on the gendered impact of climate change and disasters was also raised together with calls for action.
12. Participants identified the lack of disaggregation of data by sex, as well as age, disability, location and other grounds of discrimination as a major obstacle to comprehensively capturing the scope of gender inequalities experienced by

marginalized groups of women. The lack of data on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender women was highlighted as a gap that required attention. The difficulties of collecting data in humanitarian contexts were also raised and the resulting challenges for targeted responses.

13. Participants voiced concern about one-off surveys and the absence of systematic and regular data in many areas. In this respect, the lack of technical capacity, financial and human resources dedicated to gender statistics was emphasized as a major obstacle. Many participants noted the need for greater coordination between statisticians and policy makers so as to enhance the usefulness of data and their impact on policy.

Priorities to advance gender statistics and indicators

14. Participants identified several priorities to advance gender statistics and indicators in the context of accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the post-2015 development agenda. Participants called for increased investments in statistical capacity at the national, regional and international levels and for the production of gender statistics. Specifically, several participants highlighted the need to build the capacity of national statistical agencies and line ministries to integrate gender perspectives in their national survey instruments (household, labour force and other surveys and censuses). In addition, the need for country-level technical and financial capacity to produce high quality statistics through administrative sources, such as civil registration systems, was also highlighted. Many Member States called on United Nations agencies, donors and the World Bank to assist with financial resources, capacity building and technical support.
15. Participants confirmed that data and statistical requirements for the post-2015 development agenda will be substantial, particularly for monitoring gender equality across all goals in the new framework. Several participants noted that the minimum set of 52 gender indicators provide a strong basis for monitoring gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda. However, participants noted that urgent action is needed to address gaps where statistics are not produced regularly by countries. The need to develop, as a matter of priority, new standards and methodologies to address data gaps was also highlighted.
16. Along with increased resources and capacity building, participants called for increased commitment to gender statistics from policy-makers, particularly from stakeholders across different sectors. High-level political leadership was urgently needed to increase coordination across government ministries on the production of gender statistics. Further, some participants emphasized the need for enhanced dialogue between users and producers of gender statistics. Priority attention also needs to be devoted to better dissemination and communication of sex-disaggregated data for increasing the use of gender statistics in policy-making.