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Preliminary Balance on the Global Database of Statistics and Indicators Of Gender*

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Preliminary Balance on the Global Database of Statistics and Indicators Of Gender: GENDER-INFO VERSION 2007

Paper for discussion of the Advisory Group of the Global Database, IAEG-GS

1. Background

Even though for more than three decades the preponderant paper of the statistics in gender issues was to promote, evaluate and measure the advance of women in the world, the developed efforts at national level were insufficient, the information produced was limited or null and its dissemination was scarce. As shown in the publication: “The woman in the world 2005. Progress in the statistics”, when analyzing the availability of official statistics at national level and the progress realized throughout the last thirty years, exists an unequal development not only between the regions and countries across the world, even on the availability of data of the different spheres, difficulties and issues, which are closely related to the statistical capability.

“The slight progresses realized in the statistics in gender issues and the differences observed regarding the availability of such data within the regions and the subjects obey to three factors:

Inadequate statistical capacity

Lack of gender perspective

Concepts and inadequate methods”¹

This situation remains and it is seen a major advance in the periodic and suitable production disaggregated by sex on the volume and composition of the population and scholar characteristics; a minor development in statistics regarding birth, mortality and economic activities; whereas the information about wages, participation in the informal sector, social security, political participation, violence, dynamic and composition of housing and families is incipient or not existing.

1.1 Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics

In order to replace, to a certain extent, the deficiency of information in gender issues by the national statistics systems and mainly to encourage the continuous and suitable data production, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank convened, in December 2006, a meeting of Agencies and Experts in Gender Statistics, with the aim of evaluating strategies to promote the development of gender statistics.

¹ *The woman in the world 2005. Progress in the statistics*, United Nations, 2006, page 3

In this meeting it was agreed to define a Global Gender Statistics Program (GGSP) as an instrument to foreseen stability, to orient and to bond the different international, regional and national initiatives. Also, to support and to complete the gender statistics programs. It was defined three basic strategies.

a. **To conform the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS)**, with members of gender statistics units from national, regional and international institutions, specifically by the United Nations Statistics Division and other divisions from United Nations, several regional and international organizations, as well as from selected national statistics offices, research national institutes and by focal points from gender statistics.

b. **To construct a Global Database** to improve dissemination of indicators and gender statistics.

c. **To develop gender statistics capacity within training courses** to strengthen the production and use of gender statistics to assemble, to plan, to follow and to evaluate public policies.

As for to integrate a database with statistic information from all the countries and world regions, that could include indicators from the most relevant issues and for gender analysis use, the United Nations Statistics Division, assumed the task to review different available database form the international system, to define and to develop a set of indicators that could measure and compare the advance of women in the world, in-between regions and within countries across the last 20 years, and at the end of 2007 it was available Gender-Info, as a tool to disseminate information and to keep in constant improvement and updated, with the support of the international agencies and from the national statistics offices.

1.2 Advisory group for the global database of statistics and gender indicators

On December 2007, on regards of the first Global Forum on Gender Statistics, in Rome, it took place the Inter-Agency and Expert Group Meeting on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS), with the aim to review the advances and to establish the work lines and mechanisms to continue improving the development of gender statistics. In this context, it was conformed two working groups, oriented to support two lines of action by the IAEG-GS; one to develop strategies to strengthen the capability of the officials at the national statistics offices regarding gender statistics and the other to support the improvement and dissemination of the global database.

The Group Objectives

To review and to orient the Secretariat from the GSSP, in the components of the Global Database of Gender Statistics and Indicators specially:

a. To review the Framework of statistics, indicators and metadata

b. To review and to identify the key areas regarding gender equality, from which there are not available gender indicators and statistics at international level and a proposal of new indicators to correct the deficiency

Members of the Group

Countries: Canada, Philippines, Malawi, Mexico, Zimbabwe.

International agencies: ECLAC, ESCWA, UNIFEM, World Bank and World Bank Institute.

2. Gender Info Value

- **Global consultancy specialized system in gender statistics**, that offers comparable and homogeneous data to analyze women and men situation in the world.
- **Useful tool for the follow up of international summits and resolutions**, to evaluate the improvements in equal gender issue and about the efficacy in public policies by country, region and world level.
- **Useful tool to evaluate the improvements and the information capacity at national, regional and international level, in the production and dissemination of gender statistics in the last 30 years.**

Information offered

Relevance

The United Nations Global Gender Indicators database offers relevant information about important issues that shows gender inequalities at regional and national level with available data for the years 1985 to 2007 and with population projects from 2010 to 2030. It is about a system that offers useful information to governments, international organizations and focalized groups and for general users that require to evaluate gender inequalities in different contexts; but specially with the aim to serve for the development of public policies that trend to diminish the gaps between women and men.

Comparable

For the comparison of information in a global environment it is seek that the information appears from the same sources and use the same calculus methods with the use of constructed variables with similar concepts. The Global database indicators are compiled and calculated by international organisms with their own databases, such as UNESCO, OIT, UNICEF, etc.

With a global database, each country will assume the responsibility to respond a comparable common indicator framework at international level, and also to respond to their local information systems, so both systems (the global and the local) be constantly fed back.

It facilitates the consultation in a single site and the comparison with other information systems

To have an integral system of statistical information allows a better comparison of the inequalities between men and women and in-between countries. A system as Gender Info could suggest countries to homologous definitions, variables and methods of calculation to elaborate comparable indicators and to suggest mechanisms to update the database.

3. Reach and limitations of the Conceptual Framework of Statistics and Gender Indicators incorporated in Gender-Info.

Due to the limitations of information and the conceptual differences presented by the produced data at national level, Gender-info is based on a set of issues for which there is disaggregated information by sex and those with a major advancement, such as the inner part of the problematic as well as the continuity of its investigation.

For this reason, Gender Info was constructed with the available information in the international information system such as the received from the statistics national systems as well as the estimates elaborated in the statistics offices from ILO, IPU, UNAIDS, UNDAW, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNPD, UNSD and WHO. Its composition constitutes at the same time its strength and its weakness; due to it is certain that what is guaranteed is the methodological and technical comparability in the definition of data; is an obstacle to incorporate issues less explored by the national systems or by the United Nations regional offices or even from other sources of information at international reach, such as OECD, World Bank or the Mundial Economic Forum.

3.1 Issues

Gender Info presents 116 indicators for the 6 issues and 18 sub-issues, to compare the population composition, the conjugal situation and the health conditions of women and men within the two last decades; as well as to evaluate the access to education, health, work and the decision taken in the public and political life.

Table 1. Gender-Info 2006/Subject Matter GENDER INFO SUBJECT MATTER

Theme/Subsubject	Indicators	Theme/Subsubject	Indicators
EDUCATION	44	HEALTH AND NUTRITION	24
Enrolment	24	HIV/AIDS	11
Literacy	4	Life Expentancy	2
Progression and Completion	10	Mortality	5
School Life	2	Nutrition	2
Expentancy		Reproductive Health	4
Teaching Staff	4	PUBLIC LIFE AND DECISION-MAKING	4
FAMILIES	14	Political Participation	4
Childbearing	8	POPULATION	10
Unions	6	Distribution	4
WORK	20	Size and Composition	6
Economic Activity	2		
Employment	14		
Unemployment	4		
TOTAL OF INDICATORS	116		