

Inter-regional Workshop on the Production of Gender Statistics  
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## **OPENING REMARKS**

by

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Dr. Pronab Sen, Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation from India, Ms. Lucia Fort, Senior Gender Specialist, Gender and Development Group, World Bank, Dr. Jeremiah Banda, Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Branch, United Nations Statistics Division, Dr. S.K. Nath, Director General CSO of the GOL, distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman — on behalf of the UN system in India, a very good morning to you all!

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to be here this morning. I bring you greetings from Dr. Maxine Olson, RC of the UN System in India, who unfortunately cannot be here with us.

It is such a pleasure to see officials and experts from around the globe at this workshop. This level of representation for gendered statistics is very encouraging for all of us — as you know gender concerns must cut across all sectors and must be integral to any and all development, for as it has been often said "Development which is not engendered is endangered".

There are several reasons why this workshop is so special. The fact that it is on the production of Gender Statistics, is one of them. For an organization like UNIFEM, which works on gender equality and the empowerment of women, this is something that is really exciting — because there is such an urgent need for it and such a short supply. Another reason is that it has been organized by the United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Government of India, UNDP, the World Bank and UNIFEM South Asia. It reflects the oneness in the UN system that we are all working towards and it also reflects the UN systems endeavour to orient their efforts to "respond to national priorities". I think, this workshop holds great promise, for all of us. We can never have too many gender advocates!

I do not need to emphasize the power of statistics to this gathering. Statistics can make or unmake people. Right from the stage of policy formulation and programme setting, one has to rely on statistics. A policy can be sensitive or not sensitive, effective or not effective and relevant or not relevant, depending on the statistics and facts on which the policy is based. Or can even exist or not exist, eg. support for single mothers in CIS

countries or HBW in India. Policy, planners and implementers rely on statisticians to determine the magnitude of the issue, its dimensions and implications. Statistics are also an important source of monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programs on the ground. And these statistics gain credibility and acceptance when collected and tabulated by the government. Research.... small.... sample size....credibility of the organization doing it, often questioned.

Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to quote some known global statistics that help to highlight certain realities:

- Women comprise half the world's population
- Women contribute two-thirds of the world's work hours
- Women earn one-third of the world's income
- Women own less than one-tenth of the world's resources

\$11 trillion is missing from the global statistics because the conventional statistical instruments are unable to net the paid and unpaid work of women.

Yet the male image attributed to the workforce is a universal phenomenon. Paucity of appropriate data, appropriate statistical instruments as well as women's actual input to economic development –paid and unpaid– greatly contributes to the myth of the worker being male. As a result the macro policies are often gender blind. Macro economic policies should include more rigorous analysis of unpaid and paid work in their scope of enquiry, formulation and appraisal.

The UN system, has, over the decades, been working to ensure that the productivity of women does not remain in the shadows. In line with the Beijing Platform of Action, the UN system, especially UNIFEM, has worked to improve the visibility of women in the national accounting systems by providing technical and financial support to a number of countries in South Asia. For over a decade (1991-2001), efforts have been made to engender the census exercises in India, the Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan in partnership with Governments, UN agencies and NGOs. Working with UN ESCAP, UNIFEM supported the process of generating sex disaggregated data in 14 countries for the statistics book on 'Women and Men'.

I would like to make a mention here of the SAARC Gender Database, which is in the process of being established, after having been endorsed by all seven SAARC member countries. A key component of the MoU between the SAARC Secretariat and UNIFEM, this is envisioned as a Gender-Data Shop to facilitate engendered planning, advocacy and the identification of gaps and challenges. The countries will be collating and generating data on Violence against Women, especially Trafficking, Feminization of Poverty, and Health including HIV/AIDs. Research on issues will be supported and quantitative and qualitative data developed according to the prototype agreed upon. Including both traditional and non-traditional indicators, the data will be consolidated into an institutional SAARC Gender Database and located at the SAARC Secretariat.

There have been a number of global conference declarations and covenants – and here I mention the BPFA, the Cairo POA and CEDAW that have noted the urgency for compiling sex disaggregated information especially in the context of women's rights leading to their empowerment.

Further, the Millennium Development Goals have also identified a number of gender responsive indicators to be monitored for targets to be achieved by 2015. While there is flexibility for countries to identify alternative indicators, the need for development of a mechanism for statistical monitoring of the progress of indicators cannot be over emphasized.

UNIFEM's association with the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Government of India, dates back to 2002. We have had the opportunity to collaborate with CSO on three very important occasions. In 2002, we joined hands to host an international Seminar on the application of time use statistics; in 2004 we collaborated to engender the state level officials on engendering statistics and budget. More recently the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has formed an Independent Group consisting of experts within India, to examine existing data sources and suggest ways to capture data on home-based workers. This is again a wonderful example of collaboration ... policy formulation ... magnitude ...

Here again we have the privilege of collaborating with UNSD, CSO, UNDP and World Bank in hosting this Inter-Regional Workshop on the Production of Gender Statistics.

Words need numbers to influence development interventions and we have to ensure that they are sex disaggregated and gender sensitive. Such training workshops must continue to share new developments in the area and to keep the subject alive. I hope that the delegates will enhance the gender responsiveness of the statistical systems, evolve new gender friendly tools and apply the gender differentiated data for planning, policy making and resource allocations. We are fortunate to have with us agents of change from the government, civil society and academia from so many countries participating in the program. The vast pool of expertise in this room promises an opportunity for rich deliberations, sharing, and learning which we hope will lead to linkages for promoting cooperation and collaboration. The global programme on gendered statistics can only be sustainable if it involves all stakeholders at national, regional and global levels in its development and implementation.

I hope that this workshop leads to the collection of data on new variables, to unravel current disturbing trends, such as, the feminization of migration, the differential impact of trade on gender, and the cost of violence against women, to name a few. Data is thus the crucial pin, which legitimizes issues and adds credibility to women's voices and concerns. This workshop is an important step towards this.

To conclude I would like to again say that statistics provide a valuable tool for shaping

policies and plans, implementation and advocacy. As a tool for making a case for gender issues or for addressing them, they are incomparable. I wish the work shop all success and to the participants who have come from outside India, I wish you all a very comfortable and pleasant stay in India.

Thank you.