

Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Statistics Division

The World's Women 2005
Progress in Statistics



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DESA

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Note

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Message from the Secretary-General

Ten years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the lack of reliable national statistics on gender issues persists in many parts of the world. In recent years, efforts to monitor the Millennium Development Goals further revealed the inadequacy of those statistics that were available. That is why *The World's Women 2005* focuses on the state and progress of statistics. Based on what countries report to the international statistical system, it analyzes their capacity to produce statistics on gender issues, and highlights progress made in reporting those statistics over the past three decades.

The analysis shows that despite some improvements over the years, much more needs to be done to develop adequate statistics that address gender concerns. This report is intended as a guide to help Governments and other stakeholders strengthen statistical systems, mainstream gender statistics, and further develop concepts and methods for collecting statistics on gender concerns. I urge Governments, non-governmental organizations, researchers, academics and activists around the world to make full use of this valuable tool.



Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General

Preface

In accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference of Women in 1995, the United Nations prepares a new issue of *The World's Women* at regular five-year intervals and distributes it widely. The first issue was published in 1991, and the current one, *The World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*, is the fourth in the series.

During the 10 years since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, there has been an increasing demand for sex-disaggregated data and statistical information that adequately reflect the situation of women and men in all aspects of their life. The Platform put gender equality firmly on the policy agenda and laid out the actions required from all stakeholders to improve gender statistics in order to measure and monitor progress towards the achievement of the goals of the Platform.

To monitor progress in gender equality and the advancement of women and to guide policy, it is crucial that reliable and timely statistics be available. Yet official national data on basic demographic and social topics for gender analysis are at times deficient or unavailable. Consequently, much of the trend analysis in the previous editions of *The World's Women* published in 1991, 1995 and 2000 either limited coverage to countries that had reasonably good data over time or relied on national and regional estimates prepared by the international statistical system.

The direction and focus of *The World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics* is on the state of national statistics useful for addressing gender concerns. That focus is necessary in order to know the extent to which official national statistics, as differentiated from internationally prepared estimates, are available to address various gender concerns. The report reviews the current availability of data and assesses progress made in the provision of gender statistics during the past 30 years. It also identifies areas, such as violence against women, power and decision-making and human rights, where statistics are particularly difficult to obtain owing to their nature or to a lack of well-defined and established concepts, definitions and/or methods of data collection. In addition, it offers suggestions for a way forward in building national statistical capacity, mainstreaming gender statistics and developing and refining concepts and methods relevant to the production of gender statistics. The fourth edition of *The World's Women* therefore takes a somewhat different track from its predecessors, looking at progress rather than trends in statistics.

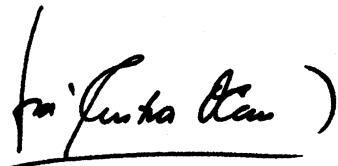
As in the three previous editions of *The World's Women*, non-technical language has been used to make the publication accessible to a large audience and respond to the needs of different users, including policy makers, non-governmental organizations, researchers, academics and gender specialists.

The World's Women 2005 was prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of DESA

provided substantive support for the report. United Nations Regional Commissions and specialized agencies provided statistics, information and guidance in their respective fields of expertise, including the Population Division of DESA, the International Labour Office, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The Governments of Italy and Germany and the World Food Programme provided financial support for the publication.

Assistance in preparing the report was provided by the following consultants: Lorraine Corner, who drafted some chapters; Tina Johnson, who edited the first drafts; and Nicki Adler and Jim Eschinger, who designed the text pages of this publication.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "José Antonio Ocampo". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

José Antonio Ocampo
Under-Secretary-General
for Economic and Social Affairs
December 2005