

*African Experiences on Capacity Building for the Production of Gender Statistics*

Prepared by

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## **Abstract**

It is now increasingly acknowledged that gender is not only a moral issue but also, and more importantly, a development issue. Despite this recognition, little progress has been made in addressing gender inequalities and empowerment of women. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of reliable gender sensitive information in support of sound policymaking, program formulation, and monitoring and evaluation of development initiatives such as those enshrined in the Millennium Declaration.

Several initiatives and partnerships have been initiated at the African level to mitigate these challenges. They include the setting up of the StatCom-Africa Working Group on Gender Statistics and the creation of a City Group on Gender Statistics: the Kampala Group. In addition, a Gender Statistics Network has been set up to serve as a link between various stakeholders working towards the improvement of the production and use of gender statistics. These initiatives and related activities provide stakeholders with fora where partners and countries can exchange their respective experiences on data collection and processing, and on how to best translate this information into sound policymaking and program formulation tools.

This paper presents the status of ongoing and planned measures and activities in support of statistical capacity building efforts aimed at reinforcing the capacity of African countries to produce and use gender statistics. In doing so, it briefly explains what gender statistics are. It further presents ongoing individual efforts across the continent in reinforcing countries' capacity to produce gender statistics. This is followed by a review of coordinated capacity building initiatives and activities at the regional level in this regard. Finally, it concludes by sketching the way forward.

## **1. Introduction**

African countries and development partners have increasingly recognized the need for better statistics to design policies informed by evidence and for decision-making. Statistics are an essential support for policy implementation as well as for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes in order to understand the impact of development initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs). This is in line with the commitment made by developing countries in the world—including those in Africa to the results agenda or managing for results.

In managing for results, there is consensus around the fact that women and men face different socioeconomic realities. This is partially reflected in many frameworks and initiatives aimed at supporting countries achieve their development agenda including the MDGs. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are an integral part of the development process as demonstrated by their inclusion in declarations, commitments and development frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the MDGs, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its gender component, the African Union (AU) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, and the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

To properly support policy design and implementation and monitor and evaluate progress made by African countries towards achieving their respective development agendas, there is a need to improve the availability and use of gender sensitive information. Unfortunately, many of the African National Statistical Systems (NSSs) have not taken the necessary steps in addressing gender issues in the production and use of statistics due to a number of factors. These include the lack of capacity to deliver the needed quality and timely gender-sensitive information and a limited understanding of gender-related issues and concerns.

This paper presents the status of ongoing efforts and initiatives aimed at improving gender mainstreaming into statistical production and processes in the African region. In doing so, it briefly defines what gender statistics are in section 2. Section 3 deals with the status of ongoing individual efforts on the continent in the production and use of gender statistics while section 4 presents regionally coordinated capacity building activities for the production of gender statistics by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and its partners. Section 5 concludes and gives the way forward.

## **2. What are gender statistics?**

Gender statistics are more than sex-disaggregated data. While sex refers to relatively fixed biological differences between men and women, gender refers to socially constructed differences between sexes. Unlike gender differences, which can be changed by adopting different attitudes or by any policy implementation, biological differences are by definition fixed and unchangeable. Sex-disaggregated data are those collected and tabulated separately for women and men, whereas gender statistics are those compiled and analysed while recognizing that gender-based factors influence women's and men's different social conditions, relations, access to resources etc. They allow for an analysis of women's and men's participation in and contribution to all social and economic areas. They also allow for measurement of the outcomes of women and men's participation and contribution to the economy. They include data that highlight differences in roles, resources, power, norms and values in, inter alia, the following areas: program monitoring, results-based monitoring, policy, program and financial accountability, responsibility, transparency, advocacy and lobbying, etc.

### **3. Selected capacity building activities for the production of gender statistics**

In recognition of the importance of gender statistics in the development process and in response to the growing demand for gender sensitive information, African stakeholders have engaged in selected initiatives and activities aimed at reinforcing the capacity of countries to produce and use gender statistics. These efforts were made at individual organization level and/or on a limited coordinated and collaborative basis. Presented in this section are some of the activities and initiatives launched by the UNECA and its partners in this regard.

#### **3.1. Engendering Population and Housing Censuses**

Population and housing censuses (PHC) represent one of the most important statistical infrastructures for data collection on the number and characteristics of the population of a country. They are part of an integrated system that includes other censuses (such as agriculture), surveys, registers, and administrative data. They provide the benchmark for population counting at national and sub national levels and may be the only source of information for certain social, demographic, and economic characteristics in several countries for long periods of time. Moreover, they can be used to construct a solid framework to develop sampling frames. Building the capacity of African countries to produce gender statistics will only be effective if gender aspects are mainstreamed into PHC.

To mainstream gender into PHC, the UNECA is undertaking a project aimed at engendering the Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses (P&R). The expected output is the production of a Gender African Supplement to the P&R. The project consists in reviewing from a gender perspective, the statistical frameworks for the preparation of the 2010 Round of PHC and providing recommendations on how to integrate gender perspectives in census undertaking. The work on this Supplement to the P&R is ongoing.

#### **3.2. Gender Statistics Network**

In recognition of the importance of knowledge sharing for the development of tools aimed at addressing gender issues and in line with the recommendations of the StatCom-Africa Working Group on Gender Statistics, the UNECA has just completed the design of a GESNET. This is expected to provide a framework for knowledge sharing, peer learning and networking between all stakeholders dealing with gender statistics issues. Through the network, participants can advocate for sustained political commitment to integrate gender equality concerns into the policy agendas and the development of standards, frameworks and guidelines and other statistical initiatives. They can also contribute to the preparation and organization of various consultative meetings on gender measurement issues.

It is expected that the network will help to build the capacity of African countries to develop and use gender-sensitive statistics, the establishment of a permanent mechanism for promoting a dialogue among stakeholders in this area, and the improvement of gender-related analytical work in support of policymaking and program formulation, monitoring and evaluation of progress toward gender equity in poverty reduction and other development initiatives in Africa.

#### **3.3. Time Use Surveys**

Economic activities can be classified into two categories: productive and non-productive activities. Productive activities are those associated with work, while non-productive activities mainly comprise personal activities. According to the System of National Accounts (SNA), production excludes all household activities that produce domestic or personal services for own

final consumption within the same household (except for paid domestic staff). These exclusions include cleaning, servicing and repairs, preparation and servicing of meals, as well as unpaid volunteer services to other households, community, and other associations.

The concept of work is generally associated with SNA activities. Only people who are engaged in SNA work are considered to be economically active, while non-SNA activities are considered as non-economic activities. According to national accounts and labour force estimations, non-SNA activities are unvalued or invisible. On the other hand, it is well known that, on the whole, women are predominantly involved in these unvalued and invisible activities. From this evidence, it is clear that the contribution to the economy of an important portion of the population dealing with the latter kind of activities is not captured in the framework of the standard SNA.

Fortunately, statisticians have made provision for satellite accounts that help capture issues outside the SNA framework. In order to integrate unpaid work and household production in African national accounts, it is essential to construct national satellite accounts on household production. The first step in this process is to carry out Time-Use Surveys (TUSs). TUSs quantify how women and men, girls and boys spend their time between paid and unpaid work and leisure. They analyse activities and time spent on each of them. As they deal with all kinds of activities that people are involved in during a given period of time, they constitute a critical instrument to evaluate the burden of unpaid work and household production, so as to inform policymaking and budgetary allocation. Once TUSs are conducted, the output is used to construct national satellite accounts to extend the SNA by integrating unpaid work and household production. This allows the capture and evaluation of the entire economy, including market and non-market components.

Despite a general consensus on the importance of TUSs, only a few African countries have undertaken one, namely Benin, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa. The UNECA is currently supporting the undertaking of TUSs in other African countries, including Djibouti and Ghana.

### **3.4. Civil and Vital Registration Systems**

Administrative data are sourced from administrative records, which are compiled in the course of routine operations of government ministries and institutions. These data are usually compiled for internal administrative use rather than for statistical purposes and they constitute an important source of official statistics in many countries. In many cases, these are the only sources of data. This is the case of school net enrolment data used for the monitoring of the MDGs. All African countries use administrative data from ministries in charge of education and this is the information used by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to feed the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) database.

Civil and vital registration systems are an important source of administrative data, as they record the occurrence and characteristics of vital events – birth, death and causes of death, marriage, divorce, and adoption, etc. according to the laws, regulations, and legal requirements of a country. This information generally constitutes an important source of data disaggregated by sex. Combined with other sources, they can also provide gender-sensitive information. In fact, they provide vital rates such as infant mortality rate, child mortality rate, and maternal mortality rate. However, the completeness of coverage and the accuracy are prerequisites for the vital and civil registration systems information to be relevant and reliable.

Unfortunately, many African countries do not have civil and vital registration systems that meet the reliability and completeness criteria; this means that information that is crucial for addressing development issues is not available.

The main issues affecting the establishment of reliable civil and vital registration systems in Africa include infrastructure, organization, and management of the registration process, capacity constraints, and lack of suitable legislative frameworks. There is therefore a need to address the setting up of reliable civil and vital registration systems in support of the production of official statistics and gender-sensitive information.

The African Centre for Statistics is launching a programme aimed at establishing and/or reinforcing vital and civil registration systems in African countries. The discussions on the content of programme will be launched during a regional workshop to be organized in the first quarter of 2009 in the framework of a development account project: the African Knowledge Network in Support of Monitoring Progress Towards the MDGs.

### **3.5. The African Gender and Development Index**

To address the issue of gender inequalities and the empowerment of women (as requested in many conventions and charters signed by African countries), the UNECA has developed an effective monitoring mechanism, the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI). This index is expected to support policymakers in the assessment of their own performance and in the implementation of gender-balanced policies and programs.

The AGDI is a composite index that combines the Gender Status Index (GSI), which measures relative gender inequalities based on readily available quantitative indicators, and the African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS), a set of qualitative measures of progress in women's empowerment and advancement. It incorporates major international and African charters, conventions, and documents dealing with gender issues.

The GSI is made up of three blocks, namely social power, economic power, and political power. Each block consists of various components, subcomponents, and indicators/variables. Equal weights are given to components, subcomponents, and indicators. Each indicator is calculated as the proportion of female achievement to male achievement for the given variable.

The AWPS captures qualitative issues in relation to the performance of gender policies of African governments and by taking into account all major international and African conventions and charters that address women's concerns. It measures progress made by African countries in ratifying relevant conventions such as the CEDAW and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), and in implementing policies, in line with international documents, on such issues as violence against women, maternal mortality, contraception, HIV/AIDS, women's land rights, women's right to equal wages and access to new technologies and agricultural extension services.

The AWPS uses a simple scoring system that is sensitive to progress made for all cells, where it is possible using a three-point score, 0 – 1 – 2. The AWPS also uses the same weights for all variables. It is measured in percentages set to a possible maximum score, in which each row is seen to have a possible maximum score set at 100%. The total score of the AWPS is similarly computed from the total of all 13 rows, which again is set at 100%. The scoring is done on a three-point scale with 0 indicating a zero performance on the measures on the horizontal axis, 1 a poor to fair performance, and 2 a good to excellent performance.

The AGDI has a number of strengths and weaknesses that are worth mentioning. The strengths include:

- It comprises a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures;

- It allows measurement of issues that so far are not taken into account in internationally comparative indices, such as time use and ownership of rural/urban plots/houses or land;
- It is based on nationally available data, unlike other indices that rely on internationally maintained databases;
- It measures issues of particular relevance to the African context;
- It uses African policy documents such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS;
- It is very easy to generate and use.

On the other hand, the AGDI also has some weaknesses, including:

- The limitation to measuring the gender gap, irrespective of the general socio-economic performance of a country;
- The inability to capture issues such as identity and personal choice;
- The focus on gender equality and the status of women without any reference to other intersecting factors such as race, ethnicity, the rural/urban gap and age.

Twelve African countries have completed the AGDI process so far, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda. It is being currently implemented in additional countries, namely Botswana, Cape Verde, Gambia, Namibia, and Senegal.

### **3.6. Engendering the MDGs**

As mentioned earlier, gender equality and women empowerment are of paramount importance in the pursuit of the development of African countries. One of the frameworks for the alleviation of poverty, the MDGs, is only partially addressing gender and empowerment of women. In fact, only two of the eight goals are explicitly dealing with gender issues. The crosscutting nature of gender calls upon the consideration of gender issues in all aspects of the MDGs, what the current set of indicators does not address adequately. This brought a number of partners and collaborating agencies including the UNECA (ACGS and ACS), the United Nations Development Programme/Regional Bureau for Africa (UNDP/RBA) and UN-HABITAT to engage in a project aimed at engendering the current set of MDGs.

The overall objective of the Gender and MDGs project is to assess progress made toward the accomplishment of the MDGs taking into account the gender dimension in all targets. The strategy consists in the assessment of each MDG on a gender perspective, identification of additional targets for each MDG, using data from all available sources including micro-data from household surveys, disaggregating data as much as possible and combining it with age and other relevant variables, and assessing inequality through data analysis. Work is in progress under this project.

### **3.7. African Women's Rights Observatory**

The UNDP, UNECA and the African Union Commission (AUC) launched an initiative aimed at creating an observatory for women's rights. This is expected to serve as a comprehensive source of data on women's rights; promote awareness, analysis and use of data at national level; collect, process and make accessible in user-friendly manner information provided by government agencies and the UN system; create a network of users and content providers; provide a platform for African researchers to access country-specific data on women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment; assist the UNECA, AUC and UNDP to publish qualitative appraisal of

the progress achieved towards various commitments and goals; and encourage countries to develop adequate monitoring systems. The work on this initiative is ongoing.

#### **4. Ongoing coordinated efforts in the African region**

In line with one of the recommended actions set by the Beijing Platform for Action, the international community has set up a series of fora on gender statistics. These are expected to enhance countries' capacity to collect, use, and disseminate indicators assessing the status of women in society, and to provide a platform for international dialogue on how to improve indicators, and support more effective policies on gender.

At the global level, the Global Forum as well as the Inter Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on Gender Statistics were established in December 2006 in response to a growing demand for quality gender statistics and to create synergies among existing individual initiatives around the world. The Global Forum on Gender Statistics took place in Rome, Italy from 10 to 12 December 2007, followed by the establishment of the IAEG on Gender Statistics.

Building on the momentum of the observed efforts at the global level, African stakeholders engaged in a series of initiatives to produce and use gender statistics on a more coordinated basis. This consists, inter alia, in setting up a Working Group on Gender Statistics in the framework of the Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM-Africa) and a City Group on Gender Statistics: The Kampala City Group. Moreover, they have engaged in partnerships aimed at providing opportunities to discuss issues related to gender statistics on a regionally coordinated basis. Presented below are the most important initiatives and related activities.

##### **4.1. The StatCom-Africa Working Group on Gender Statistics**

Established during the first meeting of StatCom-Africa, the Working Group is expected to develop a regional program on gender statistics that will serve as the framework for intervention in African countries in this area. The action plan for the Working Group include training, awareness creation, networking, mainstreaming statistics into National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and research.

In terms of training, the focus is on engendering curricula in Statistical Training Centres (STCs) and developing a gender statistics course module that could be used not only by STCs but also NSS wide. Under awareness creation, the action plan intends to develop, produce and disseminate gender advocacy materials and conduct workshops and seminars geared towards various audiences. The Working Group also created a gender statistics network (GESNET) that is expected to be a repository of useful and relevant resources and literature accessible to all stakeholders. In order to engender statistics in NSOs, the Group intends to mainstream gender into NSOs' structures and engender censuses, surveys and administrative record systems. Finally, the working Group plans to undertake research in the compilation and dissemination of gender statistics, conduct gender-related impact analysis, and develop methodologies for the production of gender statistics.

##### **4.2. The High Level Policy Dialogue on Gender Statistics for Socio-economic Development**

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in close collaboration with the ACS, the ACGS, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and InWent, organized a High Level Policy Dialogue on Gender Statistics for Socio-economic Development. The objective of this workshop was to sensitize statisticians about the important and urgent need to take into account the gender dimension in data collection, analysis and dissemination.

Participants to the workshop were exposed to the concept of gender statistics as well as explanations on why gender statistics are needed and used and the challenges statisticians are facing in producing them. In addition, they discussed and exchanged experiences in data collection and tools designed to measure inequality as well as ways and means to engender projects. They also reviewed initiatives taken at regional level to build capacity for producing gender statistics and sketched the way forward.

At the end of the meeting, participants proposed a series of actions. These included the development of an African Gender Statistical System (AGSYS) that would consist of the design of a conceptual framework, a methodological framework, reference gender classifications, gender indicators, and to set up gender units in NSOs as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and conduct studies that allow comparisons over time and among countries. They also agreed on the development of an African Gender Statistics Programme (AGSPRO) consisting of designing of the programme, country participation, methodological developments, planning activities, implementing the activities, reviewing the quality of data, analyzing the data collected, building capacity, managing databases, reporting, and continuously advocating for gender mainstreaming into statistical processes.

In the short term, participants agreed to promote dialogue among regional and sub regional organizations, prepare an African strategy on gender statistics, and establish the Kampala Group (City on Gender Statistics).

#### **4.3. The Regional Workshop on Gender Statistics**

As a follow up to the High Level Forum held in Kampala and in order to move forward the gender statistics agenda in Africa, a regional workshop on gender statistics was organized by the ACS in close collaboration with the AfDB, InWent, and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) in Addis Ababa from 15 to 16 December 2008. In attendance were heads of NSOs, coordinators of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), representatives of PRSs Units, key line ministries, heads of Regional STCs, head of statistics and gender programmes in Regional Economic Communities (RECs), gender specialists and representatives of development partners.

The workshop was meant to provide strategic directions and impetus for the mainstreaming of gender statistics principles into NSSs with the view of enhancing the capacity of key change agents in the development of statistics at the national level. It was also expected to come out with concrete inputs for the African Gender Handbook for Censuses and Surveys and a time frame for the next steps for the development of a regional programme and country gender statistics strategies drawn from the latter.

Participants took a series of resolutions at the end of the workshop including necessary steps to be taken to ensure that the Kampala Group, the StatCom-Africa Working Group on Gender Statistics and the GESNET are fully functional; start the work on the development of a Regional programme on Gender statistics and the related country gender statistics strategies; and develop an AGSYS.

#### **5. The way forward**

Enhancing the capacity of African countries to produce and use gender statistics has gain a lot of attention due to the crying needs for this kind of information on the part of stakeholders. Building on the momentum observed at the global level namely with the launch of the Global Forum and the IAEG on gender statistics, African stakeholders and their partners are setting up a number of strategies to help African NSSs build their capacity in this area. This has come along way beginning with the third Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) in Accra,

followed by the first meeting of STATCOM-Africa, in Addis Ababa, and the High Level Policy Dialogue, in Kampala as one of the outcomes of the STATCOM-Africa meeting, and the Regional workshop on Gender Statistics.

As a way forward, the discussions in the Working Group on Gender Statistics shall start immediately after the Regional Workshop as participants subscribed to the GESNET during the workshop. The discussions will feed the development of the AGSYS to be completed by the end of 2009 and an African Gender Programme that will be presented to the second StatCom-Africa for adoption early in 2010. In the meantime, the Kampala Group shall be functional by June 2009. Building on ongoing work by the UNECA on engendering population and housing censuses, an African Gender Handbook for Censuses and Surveys will be prepared and an expert group meeting organized to finalize it.

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