



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

Fourth Global Forum on Gender Statistics
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Dead Sea, Jordan

Opening Statement

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Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to address this large audience, a testimony of the great interest in the development of gender statistics and the urgency to accelerate progress in this field.

First of all, I would like to thank the Jordanian Government and the Jordanian Department of Statistics for their support and kind hospitality. This forum is the fourth of a series launched in 2007 by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. And it is in the spirit of inter-agency collaboration that the preparation and organization of this gathering was conducted jointly by UN Women, the World Bank, UNFPA, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the UN Statistics Division.

Gender statistics are key for evidence-based policy making, for monitoring trends in reducing gender inequalities and progress in women's empowerment. Everyone here agrees that the lack of adequate data is a serious impediment to informed and effective policies. But I want to stress the fact that the real limitation is not just the lack of sex-disaggregated data. For instance, almost all countries that report data on their economically-active population at least once a year to the international statistical system, *do* report figures for both women and men.

The reason why there are no sufficient statistics to inform the necessary policies and interventions for gender equality and women's empowerment is often the lack of standards and measurement frameworks.

This is why we need to improve statistical systems and ensure the full mainstreaming of gender into data production, analysis and dissemination. This event is an important opportunity to share and learn from our experiences and devise strategies to accelerate the process of mainstreaming gender in statistics.

Over the next few days, we will look at ways to measure women's empowerment in all key areas—economic, political, physical, knowledge and information—and we will focus also on young women and adolescent girls, as the importance of integrating youth-related issues into global, regional and national development agendas is increasingly recognized.

During each of the sessions, we will also have an opportunity to review progress in some key areas where methodological work is still underway or data are not yet routinely collected, as recommended by member states at the UN Statistical Commission last year. In particular, we will hear about: the work being done to develop standards and tools for the measurement of gender based violence; recent examples of time use surveys; ways of measuring women's autonomy; and gender equality in science and in access to information.

This is a particularly important moment to take stock of progress made in gender statistics and look at the measurement tools and methods available to address issues of equality and women's empowerment. Over the next few months, the international community and member states will define the new UN development agenda that will guide development efforts starting in 2015. With the experience of the MDGs in recent years, we have become very aware of the need for statistics to assess progress towards gender equality and to address gender inequalities in all development goals. Assessing progress through the gender lens and understanding the structural causes of gender-based inequalities require data that are often not regularly produced by national statistical systems. Progress in many of these areas is underway, including in measuring violence against women, access to land and other assets and to decent work, and in the production of disaggregated data that allow the analysis of gender inequalities intersecting with other forms of discrimination or neglect, such as those based on residence, ethnicity or age.

International instruments have attempted to incorporate a gender perspective in all policy areas, in order to make policies more effective. Similarly, many governments have designed and implemented new mechanisms to ensure

that gender issues are mainstreamed in all national policies and programmes. Too often however, these efforts have been undermined by the lack of adequate data.

In the words of the Secretary-General, “there is a long way to go before women and girls can be said to enjoy the fundamental rights, freedom and dignity that are their birthright and that will guarantee their well-being”. Statistics are the indispensable basis to bring about the necessary change.

I wish you all a successful meeting and look forward to your deliberations.