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**Towards More Effective Production of Gender Sensitive Data in African
Countries: Ongoing and Planned Activities by the United Nations Economic
Commission for Africa***

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Content

<i>1. Introduction</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>2. Why are gender sensitive statistics critical for development?</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>3. Gender Statistics Challenges in Africa</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>4. UNECA's Response to Gender Statistics Challenges</i>	<i>5</i>
4.1. The African Gender and Development Index	6
4.2. Engendering the Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses for the African region	7
4.3. African gender statistics network	10
4.4. Engendering agricultural and trade statistics	10
4.5. The development and use of Time Use surveys	11
<i>5. Conclusions</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>6. References</i>	<i>13</i>

1. Introduction

The African continent has witnessed the emergence of a number of initiatives aimed at improving social, economic, and political conditions of African citizens during the last decades of the last millennium. These initiatives do include nationally, regionally, and internationally agreed upon development plans such as the poverty reduction strategies (PRSs), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These initiatives and others are part of what can be considered as the Africa's development agenda. In the pursuit of this development agenda, it is widely recognized that women and men face different socio economic realities. Hence the need to take into account the gender dimension in not only the decision making process but also in monitoring and evaluation of progress made towards attaining the above mentioned development agenda. In fact, gender equality and empowerment of women are part of development 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 NEPAD and its gender component, the African Union (AU) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

It is widely recognized that the ability for policy making, planning, programme formulation, implementation and monitoring that is gender sensitive is dependent on data that address issues and concerns of both women and men. Unfortunately, many of the African National Statistical Systems (NSSs) do not have the capacity to deliver quality and timely gender sensitive information. Therefore gender dimension like other new emerging issues constitutes an additional challenge to already weak and vulnerable NSSs.

This paper presents ongoing and planned initiatives by the United Nations economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in its quest to improve the capacity of African NSSs to produce gender sensitive information. It is organized as follows: after the introduction, second section elaborates on why gender sensitive statistics are critical for development. The third section gives an overview of gender statistics challenges in Africa while the fourth deals with the UNECA's responses to the challenges with a focus on engendering of the United Nations Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses (P&R). Finally, some conclusions are drawn in section five together with the way forward.

2. Why are gender sensitive statistics critical for development?

Gender equality and women empowerment have been for a long time considered as a moral and legal issue. Recently, these issues have taken on a very different connotation mainly in terms of economic efficiency. In fact, gender unbalances affect economic

efficiency in terms of the allocation of resources as well as the enhancement of productivity for sustainable development. Evidence abounds in the literature that development initiatives that excludes women and do not address gender inequalities are cost inefficient and fail to increase productivity, reduce poverty and enhance economic growth. Therefore is, therefore, a need for the production of gender sensitive data in support of sound policy making, planning, programme formulation, implementation and monitoring.

Gender sensitive data are more than sex-disaggregated data. They do include data which highlight differences in roles, resources, power, norms and values, in all different areas of program monitoring, result-based monitoring, policy, program and financial accountability, responsibility, transparency, advocacy and lobbying. Gender sensitive information on environmental sustainability for example should be able to assess to what extent gender issues are being mainstreamed in programs and policies for the preservation of the environment, and improving access to safe water. Indicators should, therefore, look into environmental health, water and sanitation and the impact of air and water pollution and poisonous fumes from factories on women and children's health, and to what extent are members of the local community, particularly women participating in planning and decision making regarding environmental programs. They should also address the impact of environmental degradation on availability and use of natural resources by women, and the impact of integrating gender issues in improving water and sanitation projects.

Beside providing data disaggregated by sex, what many of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are already doing, there is a need for the production of gender sensitive data. These are data that address the many facets of gender equality and women empowerment. They are a result of gender mainstreaming in the statistical production process. Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated¹.

3. Gender Statistics Challenges in Africa

A recent assessment of African NSS in the framework of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF)² reveals that many of them are trapped in a vicious cycle in which the shortage of funds contributes to poor

¹ Gender mainstreaming was mooted during the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya. The idea was developed in the United Nations development community. The idea was then formally featured in 1995 on the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

² AfDB, PARIS21, UNECA, The World Bank, "The Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa: Better Statistics for Improved Development Outcomes", ECA Documents Publishing and Distribution Unit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, October 2006.

performance and low-quality statistics, which in turn create a negative view of and further lack of support and funding for statistical operations and development. When it comes to gender statistics, the picture is even gloomier. In fact, African NSSs have not made the type of progress in designing systems and operations to generate gender sensitive data that are needed to support the advances that have been made in raising awareness of the social and economic implications of gender imbalances.

It is worth mentioning that the lack of gender sensitive data is observed even at the global level. In this regard, the thirty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission in March 2006, noted that the general lack of data to address gender issues is due largely to inadequate statistical capacity, lack of gender mainstreaming in NSS and inadequate concepts and methods used in collecting and to some extent analyzing gender statistics. Moreover, the Commission on the Status of Women in its 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action also acknowledges that the “activities for the advancement of women had been limited partly by the lack of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex, age and in many areas, inadequate methods for assessing progress”.

The challenges confronting African NSS in terms of gender sensitive data production and use include:

- Lack of a better understanding of gender concepts;
- Inadequate advocacy for gender sensitive statistics;
- Lack of commitment to gender statistics development by national governments;
- Inadequate level of and lack of continuity in resources;
- Lack of updated statistical legislations that are in line with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
- Statistical programs are not well related to national data priorities because of some competing demands;
- Under-development of statistical units in line ministries;
- Inadequate long and short-term planning for gender statistics development;
- Inadequate technical skills;
- Inadequate statistical infrastructure (sampling frames, classifications, documented concepts, definitions and methods);
- Inadequate gender sensitive data management (archiving, analysis, and dissemination).

4. UNECA's Response to Gender Statistics Challenges

In its quest to help African NSSs to address the challenges posed by the production of gender sensitive information, the UNECA has undertaken a number of initiatives including:

- Development of the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI);

- Engendering Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses for the African region;
- Establishment of the African gender statistics network;
- Engendering agricultural and trade statistics; and
- The development and use of time use surveys

4.1. The African Gender and Development Index

To address the issue of gender inequalities and empowerment of women as recommended in many conventions and charters signed by African countries, the UNECA has developed an effective monitoring mechanism, the AGDI. This index is expected to support policy makers to assess their own performance and in the implementation of gender balanced policies and programmes.

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, the components divided into sub-components and the sub components into indicators/variables as depicted in . Equal weights are given to components, sub-components, 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 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (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 (see Table 2) 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 - fair performance, and 2 a good to excellent performance (see Table 2).

The AGDI has a number of strengths and weaknesses that are worth mentioning. The strengths include: A combination of quantitative and qualitative measures; measuring 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; based on nationally available data unlike other indices that rely on international databases; measuring issues of particular relevance to the African context, using African policy documents such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS; and it is very easy to derive and use.

On the other hand the AGDI 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; and 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 process so far including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda. It is expected that the tool will be implemented in additional countries namely Botswana, Cape Verde, Gambia, Namibia and Senegal.

4.2. Engendering the Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses for the African region

Population and housing censuses (PHC) represent one of the most important statistical infrastructure 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 agricultural census), 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. Moreover, they provide a unique source for a solid framework to develop sampling frames which are a prerequisite for random sampling. Building the capacity of African countries to produce gender sensitive data would not be effective if gender aspects are not 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 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 take into account the gender perspectives in census undertaking.

Table 1: The African Gender and Development Index: Gender Status Index

Block	Component	Sub component	Indicator
Social power "capabilities"	Education	Enrolment rate	Primary enrolment rate
			Secondary enrolment rate
			Tertiary enrolment rate
		Dropout	Primary dropout ratio
			Secondary dropout ratio
		Literacy	Ability to read and write
	Primary school completed		
	Health	Child health	Stunting under 3
			Underweight under 3
			Mortality under 5
Life expectancy at birth			
New HIV infection			
Time spent out of work			
Economic power "opportunities"	Income	Wages	Wages in agriculture
			Wages in civil service
			Wages in formal sector (public and private)
			Wages in informal sector
	Income	Income from informal enterprise	
		Income from small agricultural household enterprise	
		Income from remittances and inter-household transfers	
	Time use or employment	Time use	Time spent in market economic activities (paid employee, own-account or employer)
			Time spent in non-market economic activities or as unpaid family worker in market economic activities
			Time spent in domestic care and volunteer activities
	Employment	Share of paid employees, own-account workers and employers in total employment	
		Access to resources	Means of production
	Access to credit		
	Freedom to dispose of own income		
Management	Employers		
	High civil servant (class A)		
	Members of professional syndicates		
Administrative, scientific, and technical			
Political power "agency"	Public sector	Member of parliaments	
		Cabinet ministers	
		Higher courts judges	
		Members of local councils	
		Higher positions in civil service	
	Civil society	Senior positions in	Political parties
			Trade unions
			Employers' associations
			Professional syndicates
		Heads or managers of NGOs	
		Heads of community based associations or unions	

Table 2: The African Gender and Development Index: The African Women Progress Scoreboard

			Ratification	Reporting	Law	Policy commitment	Development of a plan	Targets	Institutional mechanism	Budget	Human resources	Research	Involvement of civil society	Information and dissemination	Monitoring and evaluation	Total	%	
WOMEN'S RIGHTS	CEDAW	Ratification without reservation																
		Optional protocol																
		Art 2																
		Art 16																
African Charter of Human and People's Rights- Women's Rights Protocol- Harmful Practices																		
SOCIAL	Beijing Platform for Action																	
	Violence against women	Domestic violence																
		Rape																
		Sexual harassment																
		Traffic in women																
	African Charter on the rights of the Child art XXVII																	
	Health ICPD POA Plus five	STI's																
		HIV/AIDS																
		Maternal mortality																
		Contraception																
	2001 Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS and women																	
	Education	Policy on girl school dropout																
Education on human/women's rights																		
ECONOMIC	ILO	Convention 100																
		Convention 111																
		Convention 183																
		Policy on HIV/AIDS																
	Engendering NPRS	Access to agricultural extension services																
		Access to technology																
		Equal access to land																
POLITICAL	UN 1325 conflict resolution																	
	Beijing PFA effective and accessible national machinery																	
	Policies	Support to women's quota and affirmative action																
		Decision making positions within parliaments/ministries																
		Gender mainstreaming in all departments																

The engendering of the P&R will be built on existing and ongoing initiatives and tools such as the on-going work on the African Supplement to the P&R on PHC undertaken by the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) as well as other work on gender statistics done by other UN agencies and development partners. The activities of the project will consist of reviewing, from a gender perspective, the various stages of surveys and censuses (preliminary work, design of questionnaires and manuals for field work, data processing, and data analysis and dissemination) to ensure that the gender dimension is taken into account, and drafting and publishing an African Gender Supplement to Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses;

4.3. African gender statistics network

Recognizing that knowledge sharing is an important part of the enabling environment for the development of tools aimed at addressing gender issues, the UNECA is setting up a Gender Statistics Network (GESNET). This is expected to provide a framework for knowledge sharing, peer learning and networking among stakeholders dealing with gender statistics issues.

Through the network, participants will advocate for sustained political commitment to integrate gender equality concerns into the policy agenda and the development of standards, frameworks and guidelines and other statistical initiatives. They might also contribute to the preparation and organization of various consultative meetings on gender.

It is expected that the network will contribute to building 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 policy-making and programme formulation, monitoring and evaluation of progress towards gender equity in poverty reduction and other development initiatives in Africa.

Among the activities that will be undertaken in the framework of this project, there is the identification of potential members of the network, the interaction with the Knowledge Management Team (KMT) to design a portal for information dissemination and sharing, and posting information on the portal and through a discussion forum.

4.4. Engendering agricultural and trade statistics

Building on the work done in the framework of the AGDI, the UNECA is extending it in selected sectors of African economies namely agriculture and trade. The choice of these two sectors has to do with women's involvement in the activities of these sectors of African economies. The UNECA will develop sectoral AGDI in these two areas and produce a conceptual framework linking agriculture and trade from a gender perspective.

While women constitute the majority of the agricultural workforce, it is well recognized that their access to land, inputs, water, agricultural extension services, training, and credit is still limited, as compared to men's. Gender sensitive statistics in the agricultural sector are critical to understanding the multidimensional aspects of feminized poverty, as they relate to food security, access to capabilities, resources, services and other economic opportunities... Most African economies rely heavily on agricultural production, which form an essential part of intra-African and international trade. Therefore, developing tools that can help assessing gender inequalities in agriculture and trade is critical to address the linkages between gender related challenges in food security, market access and economic productivity.

The agricultural AGDI will include in its quantitative assessment women and men's representation in the agricultural population; participation of women and men in agricultural sub-sectors (commercial and large scale agriculture; small holding; peri-urban and urban; horticulture...); access and control over resources and services such as land, animals, inputs, water, credit, equipment, household assets, extension services, training; access and control over labor and income; share of work burden –time use- in each category of activity (productive, reproductive and community activities); membership of women and men in farmers organisations and cooperatives; and participation in decision making at individual, household and institutional levels.

The trade AGDI will consider the following aspects in quantitative and qualitative assessment: women and men's share of trade benefits at all levels, including employment; representation of women and men in trade unions, employers associations, official trade delegations, leadership of chambers of commerce; women and men's access to trade related training, credit, information on market opportunities, entrepreneurship and export promotion programmes; and other relevant measurements of gender inequalities in trade.

4.5. The development and use of Time Use surveys

Time use surveys (TUS) generate data on how individuals spend their time. The outcomes of TUS can help produce sex-disaggregated statistics on productive activities by households and estimate value of unpaid work. This in turn can allow for building National Satellite Accounts of Household Production as inputs to defining macro-economic policies that take into account women's unpaid work.

Given the importance of TUS, the UNECA is in the process of introducing the production of continuous time use surveys in six African countries a new round of annual time-use surveys namely in Cameroon, Djibouti, Ghana, Morocco, Uganda and Zambia. It is expected that in addition to the usual well-known System of National Accounts (SNA),

these surveys will provide users with a complete set of National Time Accounts (NTA)³ and National Satellite Accounts of Household Production (NSAHP)⁴. The UNECA developed the first ever NSAHP for South Africa according to the recommendations of the UN Statistical Commission in the 1993 revision of the SNA. NSAHP is the main framework for integrating gender perspectives and unpaid work into policy process.

5. Conclusions

This paper provides an overview of ongoing and planned initiatives by the UNECA in response to the challenges posed by the production of gender sensitive information in support of sound policy-making and programme formulation, monitoring and evaluation.

As a way forward and in order to reinforce the ongoing and planned initiatives, a number of guiding principles shall be considered. Data producers should strive to collect, collate, and present statistics on individuals disaggregated by sex. This is a minimum that is required to undertake gender sensitive policy decision-making and formulation, monitoring and evaluation. African countries should mainstream gender into NSS so as to make sure that gender issues are understood and taken into account at any step of the statistical process. Moreover, there is need for better coordination at the national level as well as with development partners in ensuring that surveys and censuses are engendered. Populations and Housing Censuses being one of the most important statistical activities undertaken by countries, building the capacity of African countries to produce gender sensitive data would not be effective if gender aspects are not mainstreamed into them.

³ National Time Accounts: National estimate of income and expenditure of time. A system of national time accounts would provide a basis for international comparisons and for greatly improved modeling of economic and social systems.

⁴ National Satellite Accounts of Household Production: National estimates of total value added of Household Production based on National Time Accounts.

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