

*Gender statistics: a minimum set of indicators
(revision 21 September 2011)*

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Concept Note

Background

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into statistics means that all statistics are collected, compiled and analyzed taking in consideration factors that affect and define women's and men's situations and experiences. Statistics are used to improve the understanding of women's and men's lives and how governments and organizations respond to their needs. Incorporating a gender perspective into all domains of work helps make policies more effective. However, these efforts are often undermined by the lack of adequate data to inform and monitor policies.

In 2006, the first Interagency and Expert Group on the Development of Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) was convened by the United Nations in New York to review and identify key initiatives and programmes that support and enhance national statistical systems' capacity to develop gender statistics. Three additional meetings of the IAEG-GS were held (Rome, 2007, Accra, 2009, and Manila, 2010). At the 2007 meeting two advisory groups were established –one focusing on global gender statistics and indicators database, the other on gender statistics training activities and curricula. A third advisory group on gender statistics legislation was established in 2009.

The original focus of the 2007 Advisory Group on the Global Gender Statistics and Indicators Database was the development of an international database. Attention was also brought to the “importance of establishing a minimum set of gender statistics and indicators that countries should be able to produce and for which agencies can be identified as official providers” (ESA/STAT/AC.122/L.3). In 2009, based on continued discussion within the IAEG and recommendations by members to identify a list of key gender indicators, a subgroup of the Advisory Group was established to work on the development of a minimum set of gender statistics and indicators.

To guide the work on gender statistics, in 2011 a programme review of gender statistics, prepared by Ghana (E/CN.3/2011/3), was considered by the 42nd session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC). The UNSC also requested the implementation of a global programme on gender statistics. The commission “acknowledged the strategic role of the IAEG-GS and requested the expansion of its scope of work to include a review of gender statistics with the aim of establishing a minimum set of gender indicators” (E/2011/24-E/CN.3/2011/37 - decision 2, point (f-i)).

Following the UNSC recommendation, the subgroup developed a minimum set of gender indicators. This document provides the information on the purpose of the minimum set of gender indicators and describes the process and criteria for the selection of the indicators, within a framework of gender equality, derived from the Beijing Platform for Action.

Purpose of the minimum set

The purpose of this exercise is to establish a minimum set of gender indicators for international compilation and dissemination to facilitate global comparisons of the state of gender statistics to evaluate the situation of women and men and the capacity of countries in this regard (EN/CN.3/2011/3, Para 50c).

Overall, the indicators address relevant gender issues and take into consideration important international commitments, such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (See Table 1). While there are at least three levels of indicators (international comparison; specific regional circumstances; and national monitoring), this minimum set covers the international level. The minimum set contains the minimum common denominator for statistics on gender equality and women's empowerment,

and forms the basis for regional and national exercises. Indicators specific to regional and national contexts are being developed by regional and national entities and are not part of this exercise.

While acknowledging the need for gender analysis, the main purpose of the minimum set of indicators is to provide a basis for the production of key indicators to monitor gender issues. For the purpose of gender analysis at the national level and as a tool for national policy development and monitoring, a much larger data set with additional cross-tabulations is needed. Some of the variables to be further disaggregated and cross-tabulated include rural/urban residence, race or ethnicity, disability status, among others. Normally, NSOs have a mandate to collect and tabulate data, while other institutions, including among others, line ministries, academic institutions, and NGOs undertake detailed analysis. Improving NSOs capacity for gender analysis is beyond the scope of this exercise.

The list compiled by the sub-group will be reviewed by the IAEG-GS, and presented to the UN Statistical Commission for consideration as a minimum set of indicators to be used as reference by national statistical agencies. NSOs may eventually decide to use it as a framework for national data compilation and monitoring and/or as a basis for the development of a more comprehensive list of national indicators. To the extent possible, the list should serve to promote the production and compilation of gender statistics at the national level.

Framework

Gender statistics is a field of statistics that cuts across many traditional statistical fields to identify, produce and disseminate statistics that reflect the realities of the lives of women and men and policy issues relating to gender equality (UNECE/WBI 2010). A comprehensive and well-defined system to produce gender statistics is key to the ability to monitor progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and to respond with the necessary policies and interventions.

As a comprehensive plan for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) provided an excellent starting point for the development of the minimum set of gender indicators. The BPFA's 12 critical areas of concern and corresponding strategic objectives were reviewed to identify indicators required to monitor progress on the declared objectives. An important consideration in the selection of the indicators was the existence of a conceptually clear definition. Also, the availability of data was taken into account as it could pose a limitation for the international data compilation and for tracking progress over time.

The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) monitoring framework provided an additional set of reference in developing the minimum set of gender indicators. The MDGs encompass the goal of empowering women, and countries are already committed to producing the requisite statistics for monitoring the Goals. The inclusion of MDG indicators that are relevant to gender issues also has the advantage that does not require additional effort on the part of the data providers.

The proposed minimum set of gender indicators is organized into five domains (See Table 2): Economic structures and access to resources, Education, Health and related services, Public life and decision-making, and Human rights of women and child. Each domain addresses one or more of the BPFA critical areas of concern and/or MDG goals and targets. Owing to the unavailability of either data or clear concepts and definitions, three of the 12 critical areas of concern are not covered in the minimum set of gender indicators (See Table 1).

Selection Criteria

Overall, the selected indicators should be broadly consistent with other global lists and avoid imposing an unnecessary burden on national statistical systems, national Government agencies and other partners.

Three criteria were used in selecting each of the indicators included in the minimum set. Indicators should:

- 1) Address relevant issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment
- 2) Be conceptually clear, easy to interpret, and have an agreed international definition
- 3) Be regularly produced by countries, with sufficient coverage to allow tracking progress over time

"Regularly produced" for the purpose of applying the criterion means that at least 100 countries -- geographically distributed across all regions-- have produced data for at least two points in the 1990-2004 period and at least one in the 2005-2010 period.

Based on the three criteria, the proposed indicators are categorized into three tiers as follows:

Tier 1 includes indicators that meet all the criteria.

Tier 2 includes indicators that meet criteria 1 and 2.

Tier 3 includes indicators that meet criterion 1.

A note on tier 3: Indicators or categories that are important and relevant from a gender perspective but for which there are data limitations, are included to encourage methodological development and/or further data production.

For analysis of the domains and their coverage according to the above selection criteria and placement into the tier structure, detailed information on definition, data availability, source and comments are contained in Table 3.

Tables

Table 1: Domains for the minimum set of gender indicators and the PFA areas of concern and MDG goals covered by each domain

Table 2: Minimum set of gender indicators, by domain – Short list

Table 2A: Indicators related to national norms, by domain

Table 3: List of minimum set of gender indicators, by domain with detailed information: Definition, comments, data availability and source (Forthcoming)

Table 1. Domains for the minimum set of gender indicators and the PFA areas of concern and MDG goals covered by each domain

Note: The new structure below is introduced in response to comments made in the 28 April teleconference.

Domain	BPFA Critical areas of concern and MDG Goals covered
I. Economic structures and access to resources	<p>A. The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women</p> <p>F. Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources</p> <p>H. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women</p> <p>MDG1 Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty, target 1.B</p> <p>MDG8 Develop a global partnership for development, target 18</p> <p>MDG3 Promote gender equality and empower women, target 3.A - Indicator 3.2</p>
II. Education	<p>B. Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training</p> <p>MDG2 Achieve universal primary education, target 2.A</p> <p>MDG3 Promote gender equality and empower women, target 3.A</p>
III. Health and related services	<p>C. Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services</p> <p>MDG1 Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty, target 1.C</p> <p>MDG4 Reduce under-five mortality, target 4.A</p> <p>MDG5 Improve maternal health, targets 5.A and 5.B</p> <p>MDG6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, targets 6.A and 6.B</p>
IV. Public life and decision-making	<p>G. Inequality between women and men in the sharing of power and</p> <p>MDG3 Promote gender equality and empower women, target 3</p>
V. Human rights of women and girl children	<p>D. Violence against women</p> <p>I. Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the</p> <p>L. Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child</p> <p>MDG5 Improve maternal health, target 5.B</p>
	BPFA Critical areas of concern not covered
	<p>E. The effects of armed and other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation</p> <p>J. Stereotyping of women and inequality in access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media</p> <p>K. Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment</p>

Table 2. Minimum set of gender indicators, by domain - Short list

Indicator	BPFA and MDG references
I. Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources	
1 Average number of hours spent on unpaid domestic work by sex. Note: Separate housework and child care if possible.	C.2, F.1, H.3
2 Average number of hours spent on paid and unpaid work combined (total work burden), by sex	F.1, H.3
3 Labour force participation rates for 15-24 and 15+, by sex	F.1, H.3
4 Proportion of employed who are own-account workers, by sex	F.2, MDG.1B
5 Proportion of employed who are working as contributing family workers, by sex	H.3, MDG.1B
6 Percentage distribution of the employed population by sector, each sex	H.3
7 Informal employment as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, by sex	F.2, H.3
8 Proportion with access to credit by sex	F.1, F.2
9 Proportion of (adult) population who own land, by sex	A.1, A.2
10 Gender gap in wages	F.1, F.5
11 Proportion of employed persons working part-time, by sex	F.5
12 Employment rate of persons aged 25-49 with a child under age 3 living in a household and with no children living in the household, by sex	F.3
13 Proportion of children under age 3 in formal care	F.3
14 Proportion of the population who are Internet users, by sex	MDG.8.F
15 Proportion of the population who are mobile cellular telephone users, by sex	MDG.8.F
II. Education	
16 Literacy rate for 15-24 by sex	B.2, L.4, MDG.2
17 Net enrolment ratio in primary education by sex	B.1, L.4, MDG.2
18 Net enrolment ratio in secondary education by sex	B.1, MDG.3
19 Gender parity index in primary, secondary and tertiary level enrolment	B.1, L.4, MDG.3
20 Enrolment in science, tertiary level, by sex	B.4, L.4
21 Proportion female among third-level teachers or professors	B.4, L.4
III. Health and related services	
22 Contraceptive prevalence among married or in-union women aged 15-49	C.1, C.2, MDG.5.B
23 Under-five mortality rate by sex	C.1, MDG.4
24 Maternal mortality ratio	C.1, MDG.5.A
25 Antenatal care coverage	C.1, MDG.5.B
26 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	C.1, MDG.5.A
27 Smoking prevalence among 15+ by sex	C.2
28 Proportion of adults obese by sex	C.1
29 Women's share of population 15+ living with HIV/AIDS	C.3, MDG.6.A
30 Percentage of 15-24-year-olds with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS, by sex	C.3, MDG.6.A
31 Access to anti-retroviral drug, by sex	C.3, MDG.6.B, MDG 8.E
32 Life expectancy at age 60, by sex	C.1
33 Adult mortality by cause	C.1
IV. Public life and decision-making	
34 Women's share of Government ministerial positions	G.1
35 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	G.1, MDG.3
36 Women's share of managerial positions	F.1, F.5, G.1
37 Percentage female among police officers	I.2
38 Percentage female among judges	I.2
V. Human rights of women and girl children	
39 Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months by an intimate partner	D.2
40 Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months by persons other than an intimate partner	D.2
41 Prevalence of FGM (for relevant countries only)	I.2
42 Percentage of population 15-19 ever married, by sex	L.1
42 bit: Percentage of women 20-24 years old who were married or in union before age 18	
43 Adolescent fertility rate	L, MDG 5B

Table 2A. Indicators related to national norms, by domain

Indicator	BPFA references
I. Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources	
1 Extent of country commitment to gender equality in employment	F.1, F.5
1a Whether or not ratified ILO convention 100 on equal remuneration for women and men	F.1
1b Whether or not ratified ILO convention 111 on discrimination in employment and occupation	F.1, F.5
2 Extent of country commitment to support reconciliation of work and family life	F.1, F.5, F.6
2a Whether or not ratified ILO convention 156 on workers with family responsibilities	F.6
2b Whether or not ratified ILO convention 175 on part-time work	F.5
2c Whether or not ratified ILO convention 177 on home work	F.5
2d Whether or not ratified ILO convention 183 on maternity protection	F.1, F.6
3 Length of maternity leave	F.1, F.6
4 Percentage of wages paid during maternity leave	F.1, F.6
IV. Public life and decision-making	
5 Presence of a gender quota for parliament (reserved seats and legal candidate quotas)	G.1
6 Presence of a gender quota for parliament (voluntary party quotas)	G.1
Existence of law on gender statistics	
V. Human rights of women and girl children	
7 Whether or not reservation to article 16 of CEDAW	I.1
8 Existence of laws on domestic violence	D.1
9 Whether or not inheritance rights discriminate against women and girls	F.1, L.1
10 Legal minimum age at marriage, by sex	L.1