

Teleconference 28 April 2011

Report of the conference call

Proposed minimum set of indicators for gender statistics

UNSD, 4 May 2011

Attendance:

In-person:

Erlinda Go, UNSD
Linda Hooper, UNSD
Francesca Perucci, UNSD
Claudia Cappa, Statistics and Monitoring Section, UNICEF
Papa Seck, Policy Specialist, UN Women
Sylvie Cohen, Deputy Director, UN Women
Tina Nebe, Population and Development Branch, UNFPA
Gayle Nelson, Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch, UNFPA

Teleconference: Anvi Amin, Gender, Women and Health Branch, WHO
Margarita Guererro, Statistics Division, ESCAP

Appendix I: Written comments on the concept note

Follow up

- UNSD:
- Clarify the concept note as per the discussions and the written comments
 - Add explanations/chapeau for each category
 - Align indicator list with Beijing framework
 - Set up the next call (proposed date 26 May 2011)
- Sub-group:
- Send comments on the list of indicators to UNSD
- UN Women:
- Send the requested definitions to UNSD

This report notes and summarizes the comments and discussions from the 28 April 2011 meeting/teleconference on the work toward a minimum set of gender statistic indicators.

Written comments on the concept note and the list of indicators were received from five agencies and one country (See Appendix I). A short summary of these comments was presented by Linda Hooper. In this report, written comments have been integrated into the discussions of the group.

Main points of the meeting/teleconference

Framework

On the overall Framework behind the exercise, the sub-group voiced a need to state explicitly the relationship between the indicator list and international frameworks, such as Beijing, providing justification of the balance between categories. Situating the list of indicators in the context of an international framework provide the context for the categories included and potentially provide a storyline behind the indicators. It would also provide a necessary link to a monitoring tool.

Overall, it was agreed that the main policy areas are covered with the exception of a category about norms.

To clearly define the categories, a chapeau will be included over each category to state what policy issues/priorities the category addresses, explanation of what is meant by it, why the selection was made.

Within the concept note, the sub-group agrees that a section on the framework used in the exercises needs to be included as well as clearly defining the categories.

Purpose

The purpose of the development of the minimum set of gender statistics needs to be more clearly defined as well as the use of the minimum set. It is noted that additional indicators to address specific regional needs could be added but the focus of the sub-group is at the international level.

UNSD noted that once the list is endorsed by the Statistical Commission, NSOs will use it as a framework for national data compilation and monitoring. To the extent possible the list should serve to promote the production and compilation of gender statistics at the national level.

The group agreed that there are three levels of indicators: ones for international compilation; ones to address specific regional circumstances; and ones for national monitoring. As will be defined under the purpose in the concept note, this exercise is focused on the international level. It should be noted that indicators specific to regional bodies and national context can be added as necessary by these groups.

The group also discussed whether the list should be intended as a framework for gender analysis. It was clarified that the minimum set of indicators, while taking into account the need for gender analysis, was meant to provide a basis for the production of key indicators to monitor gender issues and that for the purpose of gender analysis a much larger set of data and cross-tabulations would be needed. Normally, NSOs have a mandate to collect data and tabulate data, while other institutions, including the academia, carry out detailed analysis. Increasing the NSOs knowledge and abilities to do analysis is beyond the scope of what the group is now considering for the development of the list of indicators.

The sub-group needs to define whether we are expecting the NSOs to report or will data from be used from other databases/sources in the international statistical system? It should be noted that some of the data are produced by ministries, i.e., other than NSOs. If data from the country, which office is responsible for producing the list of indicators? Generally, it is the NSO or some other statistical coordinating unit that is responsible for this.

Relatedly, we need to ask what are we going to do with the data? Is the purpose for an internationally compiled publication or to encourage countries to produce national publications, similar to national World's Women which would promote national, country level ownership of the list and the products?

The group was concerned that it is not clear whether the focus of the exercise is on gender statistics or women empowerment indicators. In the list of indicators, some are presented as

the percentage of women and others disaggregated by sex. How the information is presented gives a message about the purpose of the indicator list. There was not a conclusive discussion on this concern, but UNSD will consider it when the indicator list is taken into a framework.

Criteria for indicator choice

The written comments addressed the five criteria and suggested reordering the criteria so that they were listed in priority order. It was suggested that the two criteria that must be met in order to be included in the minimum list are relevance and a conceptually clear definition. In line with this, the Philippines requested that the indicators considered include those most critical/relevant for planning, policy formulation and/or developing intervention programs.

Further explanation of the criteria also needs to be included in the concept note.

It was requested to define “normally” in the concept note (criteria on data production). Regularly? Need definition on periodicity.

An important concern that needs to be addressed is to specify areas for which we don't have data. It needs to be explicitly stated how the sub-group is handling categories that are desirable to measure and relevant from a gender perspective but for which there is no or limited data. It is important to include this issues and concerns despite data limitations, so that they are not forgotten and their inclusion could drive methodological developments. Does the sub-group propose a list of relevant indicators, despite lack of data (maybe as Tier 3)? Likewise, some of the relevant categories require methodological developments. Would these also be included in Tier 3?

The sub-group suggested including in the concept note what other things are needed for policy and monitoring (ie, additional cross tabulations such as rural/urban, etc).

It was requested that the tiers be more clearly defined as to how indicators are placed in each tier. ECE noted that the simultaneous requirement of reliance on existing data and reasonable coverage at the country level restricts the indicators considerably compared to an exercise seeking to develop most adequate measures.

General comment on indicators

The use of proxy for categories was raised (ie, poverty and the use of access to water or electricity at the household level?). It was recalled that the focus is on a CORE or minimum list, and we need to keep focused in the selection and limit the use of proxy indicators. However, including proxy indicators would allow NSOs to use already existing data without leaving out the monitoring of critical issues or concerns. The group noted that the use of proxy indicators should not preclude necessary new efforts for the development of appropriate measures for monitoring the specific issue or concern in question. Perhaps wording should be included in the concept note that potentially everything has impacts, although in the context of the minimum list not all things can be included.

Concern about the distance from the minimum to the proxy was expressed. Ok, to keep the category and explain the importance and suggest indicators and work that needs to be done.

The policy relevance of smoking was questioned. Also why TB was not included was raised.

ESCWA and the Philippines commented on the availability of data according to the draft list of indicators.

It was agreed that we are not including gender indices.

Comment on the process

The Philippines' suggested carrying out national assessments of the final list of indicators to ensure feasibility/practicality of the list of indicators. The assessments would include an indication of data sources and coverage in selected member countries (e.g., one country for each region, considering the level of development of a nation).

Appendix 1: Written comments on the concept note

Received from:

Fatouma Sissoko, ECA
Claudia Cappa, UNICEF
Andres Vikat, ECE
Sharita Sarrao, ESCAP
Neda Jafar, ESCWA
Jessa Encarnacion and Bernadette Balamban, Philippines

ECA:

- 1 – The concept note should bring out the problematic of gender statistics and give a clear definition and understanding of what we mean by gender indicators;
- 2 - The document should specify for what use are we developing a core set of gender statistics : that understanding is crucial for the selection of core indicators;
- 3 - The criteria should be re-arranged - criteria 4 should be criteria 1 as the relevancy of the indicator has to be the main consideration: In the priority selection, the test should necessarily satisfy the relevancy criteria. If an indicator is not relevant it should not be tested for other criteria at all.

Changes proposed in the order of criteria:

- 1) The indicator clearly addresses a relevant policy issue, including important international commitments, and is relevant to gender equality (i.e., what aspect does the indicator address) (former criteria 4);
- 2) The indicator can be produced based on an agreed international (former criteria 1);
- 3) The indicator is conceptually clearly defined and easy to interpret (former criteria 5);
- 4) Data coverage is sufficient to cover a reasonable number of countries in each region and would allow tracking progress over time(former criteria 3);
- 5) Data for the indicator are already normally produced by countries and no ad-hoc data collection is needed that place an additional burden on countries (former criteria 2);

4 – Concept note should mention that the Tier 2 indicators finally have to move to Tier 1 and the follow up is to advocate with countries to collect data on these indicators based on internationally agreed definition and concept. Therefore, it is also necessary to have the definitions and concepts clearly laid down for the Tier 2 indicators also.

5. Some indicators may be only relevant to overwhelming number of countries in a particular region and not relevant for any other region. Should these be in Tier 1 provided they satisfy the criteria?

UNICEF:

Certain criteria should be "core". This will include criteria 4 and 5, not just policy relevance. In this sense, the tier 1 should include indicators that meet at least both criteria, while tier 2 could include only those that meet all 5 criteria.

My main point was to have 2 core, instead of one. It might still be useful to highlight those that meet only these two, as these indicators may have the potential to be used to advocate for their wider use at the international level. However, this can be done within the tier 2 group, further clarify what is meant by "normally" produced (point n. 2)

ECE:

All the five selection criteria proposed in the note. However, the note is not explicit on the principle of selection into tier 2 and the role of these two tiers. It seems to me that establishing tier 1 indicators would be of priority.

The simultaneous requirement of (a) reliance on existing data and (b) coverage of a reasonable number of countries in each region seems to be an important distinguishing feature of this exercise. It restricts the indicators considerably compared to an exercise seeking to develop most adequate measures. As I understand, the recent World's Women 2010 report attempted to maximise coverage of all world regions and the data presented there could be taken as a starting point for this indicator work.

ESCAP:

The importance of defining a minimum set of indicators and what purpose this minimum set will serve is not adequately discussed in the document.

I believe the terms "core set" and "minimum set" are being used synonymously in the document, but it may be good to clarify this.

It might be worth while to elaborate a bit on how the core set will encompass/address issues related to differences in regional needs.

Are these five criteria intended to be in any particular order of importance?

If so, then maybe issues such as relevance/importance of the selected indicator should come before other criteria

ESCWA:

I. Please find ESCWA/SD feedback on the concept note that you may find useful to include:

- The purpose is to

"set up a system that allows for quantitative and qualitative measurement of gender (in)equality at the international level using agreed common suite of gender indicators with unified language, concepts, and objectives, to encourage collaborative monitoring, reporting and learning through sharing of best practice, and which will encourage the use of indicators at national and international levels and facilitate measurement of accountability and effectiveness".

- In the selection process, we may need to include first the modus-operandi we have been following:

- Compile the current state of international experiences

- Identify current groupings/subgroups for the organization of indicators and their analysis

- Reach cross-sector consensus on common suite of indicators and their respective metadata by all stakeholders

- Identify methods of reporting and follow up

II. With regard to the proposed list of gender indicators, ESCWA/SD will not be able to provide national data on the indicators listed below:

- Smoking prevalence
- Obese population
- Low hemoglobin population
- Access to bank accounts
- Part-time employment

ESCWA/SD proposes to reword some indicators:

- Proportion of children, girls and boys, (5 to 17 years old) employed in productive activities, in percentage
- Time spent on unpaid work (domestic, and caring for children and the elderly)

I am attaching the pre-final list of GIsIn Framework for reference and consideration of additional indicators, if needed.

Philippines:

A. UNSD-provided documents

1. On the purpose of coming up with a core set of indicators on gender statistics, similar to our comment sent last 25 January 2011, we would like to suggest that the indicators that will be considered in the core set are the most critical/relevant for planning, policy formulation and/or developing intervention programs.

Further, it may be recalled that during the Side Event at the 42nd Session of the UN Statistical Commission and 55th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in his presentation, Dr. Virola emphasized the need for our data users and stakeholders to demonstrate the actual policy uses of the gender statistics that national statistical systems produce. In this context, it may be worthwhile to consider including this concern in one of the chapters of the handbook. This is deemed to be a very useful input/reference when we update/improve the list in the future.

2. To ensure feasibility/practicality of the list of indicators, a data assessment to indicate data source and coverage (as the information may just be of limited scale and frequency) can possibly be conducted in selected member countries (e.g., one country for each region, considering the level of development of a nation).