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Statistics Division

10th Meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics

Helsinki, Finland, 23 October 2015

Meeting Report*

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I. Background, objectives and organization of the meeting

- 1. The tenth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) was convened in Helsinki, Finland, on 23 October 2016, before the 6th Global Forum on Gender Statistics (24 to 26 October 2016). The meeting was organized by the Social and Housing Statistics Section Demographic and Social Statistics Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The specific objectives of the meeting were to:
 - a. Provide an update on the work undertaken in the field of gender statistics by the IAEG-GS Members, in particular in the context of the SDG indicators;
 - b. Review some country practices on the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs from a gender perspective;
 - c. Review ongoing initiatives to strengthen gender statistics implemented by regional and international organizations to ensure coordination and avoid duplication of efforts;
 - d. Discuss the terms of reference, work plan and deliverables of the Advisory Group on Gender Indicators, recently established by the IAEG-GS to align the Minimum Set of Gender indicators (agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013) with the SDG indicators relevant for gender analysis;
 - e. Agree on the annual work plan for the IAEG-GS.
- 2. The meeting brought together 46 national, regional and international experts working in the area of gender statistics. Participants included experts from 19 national statistical offices (Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Moldova, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, United States and Zimbabwe), 1 Regional Commission (UNECE) and 12 international organizations (FAO, ILO, OECD, UN Women, UIS, UNICEF, UNEP, UNHCR, UNODC, UNFPA, World Bank and WHO) and WIEGO. UNSD is the Secretariat of the IAEG-GS. See Annex 1 for the list of participants.
- 3. The meeting was conducted according to the agenda (See Annex 2). The meeting was chaired by Ms. Marjut Pietiläinen, Statistics Finland, chair of the IAEG-GS.

II. Opening and objectives of the meeting

- 4. Ms. Keiko Osaki-Tomita, (Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Branch, UNSD) opened the meeting welcoming the participants. During her opening remarks, she reminded participants of the origin of the Group that met for the first time in New York in 2006 (10 years ago) to identify and review key initiatives and programmes that support and enhance national statistical offices' capacity to produce and disseminate relevant gender statistics. Since 2011, the UN Statistical Commission has given this Group full acknowledgment and support, providing a clear mandate for its work.
- 5. Ms. Osaki-Tomita stressed the importance of the work of the Group in the area of gender statistics given that around one third of the SDG indicators are relevant for gender analysis. She also highlighted the ongoing methodological work at UNSD to finalize the International

Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics and to complete the Guidelines to produce Statistics on Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective, under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project.

- 6. Ms. Marjut Pietiläinen (Statistics Finland) welcomed participants to the meeting. She thanked other Finnish authorities, including the Ministry of Finance, which provided the venue for the IAEG-GS meeting. She acknowledged the participation in the IAEG-GS meetings of several experts over the years, and also welcomed new experts.
- 7. Ms. Francesca Grum (UNSD) introduced the objectives of the IAEG-GS, established in December 2006 with the aim of providing guidance and ensuring coordination at the global level for the advancement of the Global Gender Statistics Programme (GGSP). She explained that the Group works through advisory groups focused on specific tasks. The two active advisory groups are: Advisory group on emerging issues (focused on unaddressed gender issues and related data gaps) and the Advisory group on gender indicators (just established to compare and align the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators with the SDGs indicators). In 2011, the UN Statistical Commission gave the IAEG-GS a strategic role and tasked it with (a) establishing a minimum set of gender indicators; (b) developing manuals and methodological guidelines for the production and use of gender statistics; (c) serving as the coordination mechanism for the GGSP; and (d) requested UNSD and the IAEG-GS to report back to the Commission on the proposed work plans and priorities.
- 8. Ms. Grum introduced the agenda of the meeting (available in Annex 2), focused on gender statistics for the SDGs. The agenda covered a) methodological developments to measure selected gender issues (related to Tier III indicators), b) country experiences in measuring SDG gender indicators, c) coordination and mapping of international initiatives focused on gender statistics; and d) IAEG-GS work priorities for 2017.

III. Methods: Update on ongoing methodological work to measure/monitor selected SDG indicators, and other gender issues not covered at the 6th Global Forum on Gender Statistics

- 9. Ms. Rachel Snow (UNFPA) presented to the group the ongoing work undertaken by UNFPA in collaboration with other agencies to develop methodologies to measure SDG indicators 5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care and 5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women and men aged 15-49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education.
- 10. Ms. Snow reported that UNFPA has identified household surveys, including the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), as potential sources of data for SDG indicator 5.6.1. Three questions from the DHS were selected to measure women's decision making power in three dimensions: having sexual relations; use of contraception; use of reproductive health care. Ms. Snow noted that the indicator's first two dimensions are easier to measure with existing data than the third

dimension because the DHS asks about women's decision making regarding health care, but not specifically reproductive health care. The indicator will be defined as the proportion of women married or in union aged 15-49 in a given country who satisfy all three empowerment criteria. An additional challenge of measuring the indicator is data availability. Since 2005, only 45 countries have data on the three questions (women can say no to sexual intercourse; use of contraception is mainly the woman's decision or a joint decision with husband/partner; women's own decision to use health care). The majority of the countries with available data are in East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa.

- 11. The aspiration for this indicator is to have a question(s) that will speak directly to measuring decision-making about reproductive health care. A pilot question was included in the recent MICS in Belize and the results will be reviewed during an EGM organized by UNFPA in November to discuss the final recommendations to measure this indicator. One major challenge in measuring this dimension relates to the fact that reproductive health care covers many aspects of reproductive health (including prenatal and postnatal care, abortions, HIV and other STI services/tests, PAP tests) - and women's own decisions on some aspects may be more or less contentious than others; as such, one single question would not be able to capture the different dimensions with enough specificity. An alternative solution of measuring decision making to a proxy reproductive health service such as family planning, although well acknowledged in many regions, has not been widely agreed. Another option is to stay with decision-making on the use of general "health care" as a minimum threshold instead of "reproductive health care," which could be the best option for a global indicator, relevant in both developed and developing countries, at this time. In terms of the next steps, experts will agree on how to measure this SDG indicator by December 2016 and during 2017 survey opportunities in countries not covered by DHS and MICS will be explored (e.g. China, USA and Brazil). Finally, the IAEG-GS will receive the proposed methodology and will provide technical feedback to UNFPA.
- 12. The development of the methodology for SDG indicator 5.6.2 is still in an early stage. This indicator should be considered as a complement to indicator 5.6.1 and other indicators under SDG Goals 3 and 5. The indicator will exclusively measure the existence of legal frameworks and barriers rather than the actual enforcement of such laws. Three components have been identified in relation to the existence of laws and regulations that guarantee women access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education: 1) access without third party (e.g., family, parent, guardian, spouse) authorization; 2) access irrespective of marital status; and 3) access to comprehensive sexuality education and information. For each component, barriers (restrictive/negative laws and regulations) and enablers (positive laws and regulations) will be assessed. Countries will be considered as guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education if they answer "yes" to each of the 3 components.
- 13. A self-reporting survey to be completed by governments has been developed to collect information on legal frameworks regulating access to each of the components of sexual and reproductive health care, information and education. Challenges in collecting such information include the fact that access rights granted by laws and regulations may differ

within the country. For example, people who are married might have different legal sexual and reproductive rights compared to those who are not married. In terms of the collection of data, information provided by countries could be validated and/or complemented by information from other bodies monitoring UN treaties. As next steps, experts will review and further refine specific survey questions and discuss the overall survey strategy during an expert group meeting in November 2016.

- 14. Ms. Fiona Willis-Núñez (UNECE) briefed the group on the ongoing work in her region to measure power and decision making in the household, with the objective of developing standardized indicators on household decision-making. Inequality in the public arena can often start with discriminatory attitudes and practices and unequal power relations between women and men within the family, given that many decisions are made in the household, such as those related to money and work, family formation and dissolution, partnering and reproduction, household responsibilities, recreation, health, and education, among others. The initiative will focus on the study of heterosexual couple relationships (homosexual couples could be used as a control group) in households with or without children and on who takes the decisions and the extent to which spouses agree on decisions. How individuals influence decision-making procedures (negotiation, persuasion, bargaining) and the actual expenditure, division of labour and reproductive outcomes are not within the scope of this work. Next steps include establishing a task force to review existing indicators and determining what kinds of analyses can be done with them.
- 15. Ms. Ludgarde Coppens (UNEP) briefed the group on the Global Gender and Environment Outlook (GGEO) 2016, which is the first UNEP Global Environment Report from a gender perspective. In all the domains covered by GGEO 2016, gender statistics proved to be scarce or entirely absent; where available they are typically fragmented and incomplete, making regional or cross-national comparisons impossible. Although there seems to exist a causal relationship between gender and environmental issues, data and evidence are not sufficient to establish it. Therefore, several ongoing initiatives, including the 10th tranche of the UN Development Account, focus to improve statistical methods to measure the link between gender and the environment, especially in the context of the SDGs.
- 16. During the discussion that followed, experts expressed their interest in providing inputs to the methodological developments discussed at the meeting. Regarding the proposed indicators for the measurement of target 5.6, it was highlighted that those indicators focus on women's right to decide. It was also mentioned that the proposed indicators will be tested before all countries start to collect data for global reporting. Finally, in relation to indicator 5.6.1, the discussion noted: the difficulties in measuring the making of "informed" decisions; the importance of disaggregating the indicator by age and wealth quintile based on income or assets and the need to collect information on these two variables (especially the wealth measure) in the same instrument/survey in which the main questions will be asked.

- 17. For the dimension of decision making on use of contraceptives, a question was raised on whether women using contraceptives or all women should be the basis for calculating the indicator.
- 18. In relation to the issue on whether we should measure women's decision to use "health care" or more specifically the use of "reproductive health care", several experts expressed concerns as "health care" is a very general term and women can understand this term differently. Therefore, it was suggested to test and measure the difference between these terms. However, Ms. Snow noted that there are no current surveys in which detailed questions are asked about both health care and reproductive health care for assessing the extent to which the former is a reasonable proxy for the latter.
- 19. In relation to indicator 5.6.2, it was highlighted that NSOs are not the natural counterparts for the collection of data for this indicator and that a common approach on legal frameworks across all SDG indicators should be established and legal focal points to collect these data at the country level should be identified. Additionally, it was noted that in many countries there exist customary laws that contradict the statutory laws and the methodology developed for this indicator should clarify which types of laws it refers to. Additional questions were asked on the data validation process and collection periodicity as laws do not change often over time.

IV. Review of country practices: measuring and monitoring SDGs gender indicators

- 20. Selected IAEG-GS members from NSOs presented the experiences on how their offices are preparing and/or have started measuring the SDGs indicators, from a gender perspective.
- 21. Ms. Anna Jean Casañas (the Philippines) briefed the Group on the Philippine experience on measuring and monitoring the SDG indicators from a gender perspective. At the global level, the Philippines (as co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs) has been involved in defining the SDGs indicator framework, the tier system and other working groups under the IAEG-SDGs. At the national level, the Philippines has conducted a number of multi-sectoral workshops since 2013 that reviewed the SDG targets and goals, identified relevant SDG indicators to be monitored in the country and assessed the availability of data for monitoring progress. The national workshops and related activities were carried out in consultation with a number of interagency and technical committees, including the Inter-agency Committee on Gender Statistics.
- 22. The presentation highlighted the challenges in generating data for the SDG monitoring and outlined activities to be undertaken to improve the availability of relevant, timely, disaggregated and better quality statistics. For example, in its effort to improve data availability and timeliness of the relevant SDG indicators, the Philippine is part of the EDGE project and is testing the methodology for Indicator 5.a.1. The Phillipines will also explore the possibility of collecting time use statistics through a rider survey to the existing labour force surveys; produce data on maternal mortality through the civil registration and vital statistics system; improve administrative-based data; explore the possibility of using

alternative sources such as Big Data; and evaluate the use of tablets for future data collection. The presentation also pointed out areas where further guidance from the international community is needed. They include clarifications on concepts in some SDG indicators and guidance on how to deal with data disaggregation.

- 23. Ms. Amy Smith (United States) reported that the United States national SDGs reporting platform was launched in September 2016. It uses open source software and has been formatted to meet SDMX (Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange) and related metadata requirements. She presented an assessment of the relevance of the SDG indicators for monitoring at the national level and of whether data providers have been identified for the various indicators. Related to the indicators in SDG goal 5, currently, the United States is able to provide data for indicators 5.2 and 5.b.1. As in many countries, work on identifying data providers and gathering statistics for goal 5 is still ongoing. The U.S. has decided to begin its reporting benchmark at year 2007. Ms. Smith reported that the U.S. can currently provide information for few of the 230 indicators but with continued work will be able to report on 55-60% of the indicators.
- 24. Ms. Marjut Pietiläinen (Finland) informed that the publication "Women and Men in Finland 2016" was published in June 2016 and the English version in October 2016. The publication has incorporated several improvements and indicators which can inform several SDG goals. She briefed the Group on the several initiatives and studies undertaken to better measure gender equality, which could serve for the monitoring of the SDGs. For example, in the area of VAW, Statistics Finland has worked towards more detailed and extensive data on violent offences and violence against women together with Finland's National Police Board; a statistical working group of the TASURI project has continued as a network compiling regularly leadership statistics disaggregated by sex. Ms. Pietiläinen also briefed the Group on the Nordic cooperation project under which the publication "Nordic Gender Equality in Figures 2015" was produced, and that contributed to a stronger cooperation and collaboration among Nordic countries.
- 25. During the discussion that followed, the costs of collecting data for SDG monitoring were discussed. The World Bank undertook a costing exercise linked to SDG data collection, concluding that it would cost approximately \$692 million for data collection only and an additional \$250 million for technical assistance, for 78 IDA-eligible countries to implement multidimensional household surveys every three years. Another question was raised on how the United States coordinates the work of collecting data for the SDG indicators and Ms. Smith explained the structure of the US statistical system, with the Office of Management and Budget having the coordinating role. There were also discussions on whether it would be helpful to develop standardized modules to collect data for various indicators to be attached to an existing multipurpose survey in a country.

V. Coordination: Mapping of ongoing/planned initiatives on Gender Statistics: who is doing what

- 26. In her presentation, Ms. Francesca Grum (UNSD) summarized all the inputs received from agencies regarding their ongoing and planned initiatives on gender statistics, as an initial mapping exercise conducted in preparation of the 10th IAEG-GS meeting. She mentioned that initiatives were reported under Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 16, and covered activities related to methodological developments, capacity building and data dissemination. Additionally, several cross-cutting initiatives were identified such as: establishment of data portals; preparation of publications on the status of women; data collections; and organization of meetings/fora.
- 27. During the discussion that followed, participants highlighted other initiatives that should be included in the mapping exercise, and Ms. Grum noted that the preliminary mapping exercise would be updated to reflect these contributions. A suggestion was also made to design a questionnaire to be sent to the IAEG-GS members from NSOs to identify the challenges NSOs face in producing/compiling SDG indicators, in particular those that are gender-relevant.

VI. Priorities for IAEG-GS and conclusions of the meeting

- 28. Ms. Haoyi Chen (UNSD) presented an initial assessment of differences and similarities between the SDGs indicators and the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators. She reported that there are 52 quantitative indicators and 11 qualitative indicators in the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators and data are currently available for all Tier I (35) and Tier II indicators (8), as well as all qualitative indicators (11). Out of the 80 gender-relevant SDG indicators identified by the IAEG-GS, 22 have data disaggregated by sex in the SDG indicators global database (maintained by UNSD), 21 have data but not disaggregated by sex and 37 do not have data at all. The Minimum Set has 37 additional indicators on gender issues that are not covered by the SDGs; and 54 "potential" gender-relevant SDG indicators are not in the Minimum Set. There are a total of 117 gender-relevant indicators across the Minimum Set and the SDGs if those that are exclusive to each framework are counted.
- 29. The presentation outlined a number of points for the new IAEG-GS Advisory Group on Gender Indicators to take into consideration while aligning the two sets of indicators. They include striking a balance between a gender-themed indicator set (Minimum Set) and the comprehensive development indicators (SDGs); the consideration on the maximum number of indicators that can be accommodated in the "Minimum" set; how to maintain continuity in monitoring old indicators; and implications for methodological developments.
- 30. The Group took note of the terms of reference of the Advisory Group on Gender Indicators established during the 9th meeting of the IAEG-GS with the objective of reviewing the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators and identifying potential modifications to align it with the SDG indicators related to gender.

- 31. Several members expressed interest in working in this group. The final list of members of the Advisory Group on Gender Indicators is: Brazil, Egypt, Finland, Italy, Jordan, Philippines, UN Women, UNEP, UNESCO, UNESCWA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC and the World Bank. UNFPA also expressed interests in joining the group if the discussion is relevant to its ongoing work.
- 32. The Group agreed to undertake the following activities in 2017:
 - a. UNECE will inform and report back to the IAEG-GS on the development of the methodology to measure power and decision-making in the household.
 - b. UNEP will inform and report back to the IAEG-GS on the development of measuring and monitoring the nexus between gender and the environment.
 - c. UNFPA will share the documentation from their EGMs on measuring indicators 5.6.1 and 6.6.2 with the group. The IAEG-GS will review and provide technical inputs.
 - d. The Secretariat will develop a questionnaire on challenges faced by countries in compiling gender relevant SDGs indicators (after reviewing the one developed by ESCWA) and will circulate it among IAEG-GS members for their inputs.
 - e. UNSD will update the SDG gender mapping exercise with agencies' inputs and circulate among members. The exercise will help identify key areas of future work for the Advisory Group on Emerging Issues.
 - f. The Advisory Group on Gender Indicators will initiate its work as per agreed ToR.

Annex 1. List of participants

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Annex 2. Agenda

IAEG-GS Chair: Ms. Marjut Pietiläinen (Statistics Finland)

Time	Session
9:30 - 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 17:30	Opening remarks
	 Ms. Keiko Osaki-Tomita, Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Branch, UNSD
	Ms. Marjut Pietiläinen, Statistics Finland, Chair of the IAEG-GS
	Objectives of the meeting
	Ms. Francesca Grum, Chief, Social and Housing Statistics Section, UNSD
With 13:00 – 14:30 lunch	1. Methods: Update on ongoing methodological work to measure/monitor selected SDG indicators, and other gender issues not covered at the Global Forum
break	a. Report on ongoing work on indicators 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 (UNFPA) 5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care 5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15-49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education
	b. Gendered power and decision-making in the household (UNECE)
	c. Measuring and monitoring the nexus between gender and the environment (UNEP)
	d. Discussion
	2. Review of country practices: measuring and monitoring SDGs gender indicators
	a. SDGs indicators at the country level: how statistical offices are preparing/implementing the SDGs from a gender perspective. This will help in identifying priorities in countries in terms of measuring/monitoring SDG indicators in general, and for tracking gender equality, in particular. (Selected countries: Finland, the Philippines, the United States)
	b. Discussion

3. Coordination: Mapping of ongoing/planned initiatives on Gender Statistics: who is doing what

- a. International and regional entities will report on their latest developments and activities, relevant to the Global Gender Statistics Programme and plans for future work. Expected accomplishments: a list of initiatives mapped against the SDG gender relevant indicators (based on the initial assessment and information compiled by UNSD in preparation of 10th IAEG-GS meeting)
- b. Discussion

4. Priorities for IAEG-GS and conclusions of the meeting

- a. Advisory group on indicators Minimum Set of Gender Indicators and SDG indicators (confirmed members: UNSD, UNICEF, UIS, Egypt, Finland, Italy, Jordan, the Philippines) (UNSD)
- b. Agreed next steps and IAEG-GS work programme
- c. Conclusions: Statistics Finland Ms. Marjut Pietiläinen and UNSD Ms. Francesca Grum