# Strengthening administrative data systems to improve gender statistics

Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, 13th Meeting, New York, 7-8 November 2019

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# Outline

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  - Topics and questions to explore – case studies
- NSO experiences (Morocco & Jordan)

# Definition/characteristics of admin data

- Data collected through the routine delivery of a service
  - Most often by government providers, but also through private sectors

- Continuous/routine collection

- Multi-site, high population coverage

- Base data structured by individuals or events
  - This data may be aggregated at any point within the system (from collection -> final reporting)

- Geographic or facility characteristics included

- Examples: health information systems (HIS) and education management information systems (EMIS)

# Characteristics (2)

- Collection of data for statistical purposes is <u>not</u> the primary reason the admin system exists

- Data generated by admin data systems are, by their very nature, generally focused on processes (not outcomes) and locally specific

  - To what extent can gender data derived from admin systems be aligned with international reporting needs?

  - Or…to what extent can gender data derived from admin systems <u>complement</u> reporting needs, particularly for local policy and planning?

# IAEG-GS Advisory Group on Strengthening Administrative Systems to Close Gender Data Gaps

- Convened in 2019 at request of IAEG-GS Global Secretariat

- Members: Brazil, Canada, Ghana, Jordan, Morocco, Uganda, Zimbabwe, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ILO, OECD, UNFPA, UNICEF (Chair) UNODC, UNSD, UN Women, World Bank

- Objectives:
  - Provide country guidance on how admin systems can be maximized as a source of gender data for global and (sub)national reporting
    - Investments guided by maturity of existing admin systems
  - Build upon (limited) evidence base on the value and potential of admin data for gender statistics

When the **right data** are in the **right hands** at the **right time**, decisions can be better informed, more gender-responsive, and more likely to protect women's and girls' rights
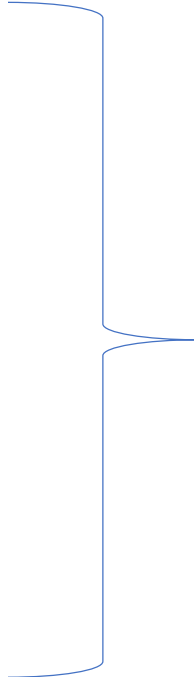
# Why this work now?

- Calls for better gender statistics for many years – 'paucity' of data

- Several mapping exercises by topic (health, education, etc.) and country/region – major data gaps highlighted

- Increasing cost of data – need to do more with existing systems (and need for more timely data)

- 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
  - 'Leave no one behind' – more and multiple disaggregation (sex and…)
  - Multiple calls for "better use of admin data," but limited discussion re what this means, particularly vis-à-vis gender statistics, on a practical level

# Methodological approach

✓ Desk review of previous work

- What do we still need to know?

✓ Short statistical query of IAEG-GS Advisory Group member countries (7 in total)

- Case studies: 3-4 selected countries (Nov./Dec.)

- Draft recommendations and discussion paper (Dec.)

Input and review by Advisory Group

# Previous work – understanding the gender data gaps

| Year | Thematic focus | Organizations | Key findings |
|------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 2019 | 104 gender-relevant indicators in Africa | Open Data Watch; Data2X | 48% indicators missing or lacking sex-disaggregation; Health (best coverage); Environment (worst) |
| 2019 (2017) | Gender statistics by thematic area | Data2X | Education gaps – learning outcomes, excluded girls, transition rates, digital literacy, aspirations; Health gaps – cause-specific mortality, excess disease burden, VAW, mental health, adolescent health, service utilisation, disability, ageing |
| 2019 | 43 health-related SDG indicators | WHO | Able to provide gender statistics on 16 indicators; One-in-seven country indicator values had no data since 2000 |
| 2018 | Gender statistics and the SDGs | UN Women | 10 out of 54 gender-related SDG indicators can be reliably monitored at global level |
| 2017 | Gender-relevant environmental SDGs | UN ESCAP | Limited amount of sex disaggregation across environment indicators |

# Previous work - admin data systems and statistics

| Author, date | Publication |
|---|---|
| UNDP | Data ecosystems for sustainable development |
| Statistics Canada, Australian Bureau of Statistics | The use of administrative data in statistical systems [*several publications*] |
| Rizinde et al, 2018 | Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Rwanda: The role of administrative data inclusion |
| Nabyonga-Orem, 2017 | Monitoring Sustainable Development Goal 3: how ready are the health information systems in low-income and middle-income countries? |
| MacFeely & Barnat 2017 | Statistical capacity building for sustainable development: Developing the fundamental pillars necessary for modern national statistical systems |
| Connelly et al, 2016 | The role of administrative data in the big data revolution in social science research |
| World Bank, 2016 | Using Administrative Data to Assess the Impact and Sustainability of Rwanda's Land Tenure Regularization |
| Thomas et al, 2016 | What systems are essential to achieving the sustainable development goals and what will it take to marshal them? |

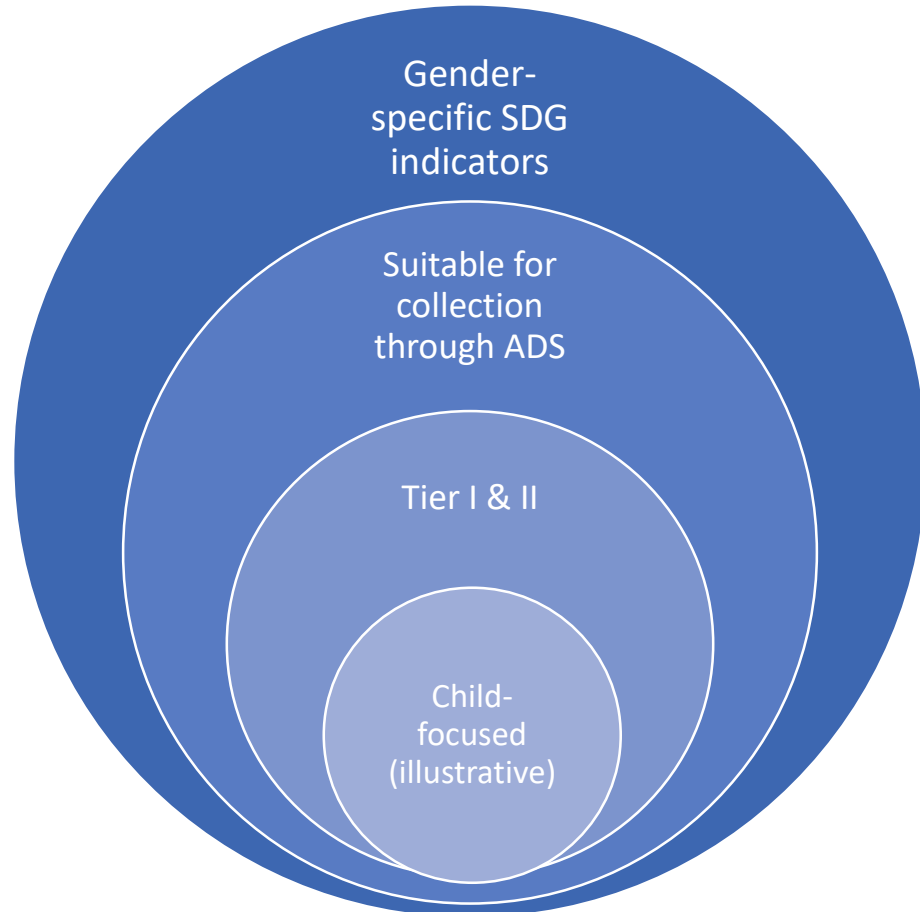# Previous work - admin data systems and gender statistics

| Author, date | Publication | Key themes |
|---|---|---|
| UN Women, 2019 | Advancing administrative sources of data for monitoring gender-specific sustainable development goals in Africa | • 63% of the 54 gender-specific SDG indicators can come from admin sources<br>• Relatively more cost-effective source<br>• Notable and varied quality concerns and capacity challenges |
| Centre of Excellence for CRVS systems, 2019 | Harnessing CRVS systems for gender-related SDGs Gender and CRVS: making the invisible visible Leaving no-one behind | • Strengthening CRVS systems are inputs for measuring SDGs and are goals themselves<br>• CRVS systems benefit women and girls in several ways |
| UN Women, 2018 | ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls. Data Collection and Use | • Provides clarity on different types of data collected and their different uses/purposes |
| EIGE, 2016 | Administrative data collection on violence against women: Good practices | • Admin data to monitor and evaluate adequacy and effectiveness of policy and practice to prevent VAW |

# What do we still need to know?

Priority questions informing statistical query:

- To what extent are admin data suitable for closing gender gaps in SDG reporting? What challenges do countries face?

- Are there specific challenges for generating statistics from admin data that are unique to, or more pronounced for, gender statistics?

- What other data can admin systems provide (or should aim to provide) to inform the broader gender data landscape for local programming and planning?

- What specific investments are needed to ensure that admin data systems can yield needed gender statistics?

- How do we leverage the broader field of work to improve admin data and data systems so that they deliver on this potential?
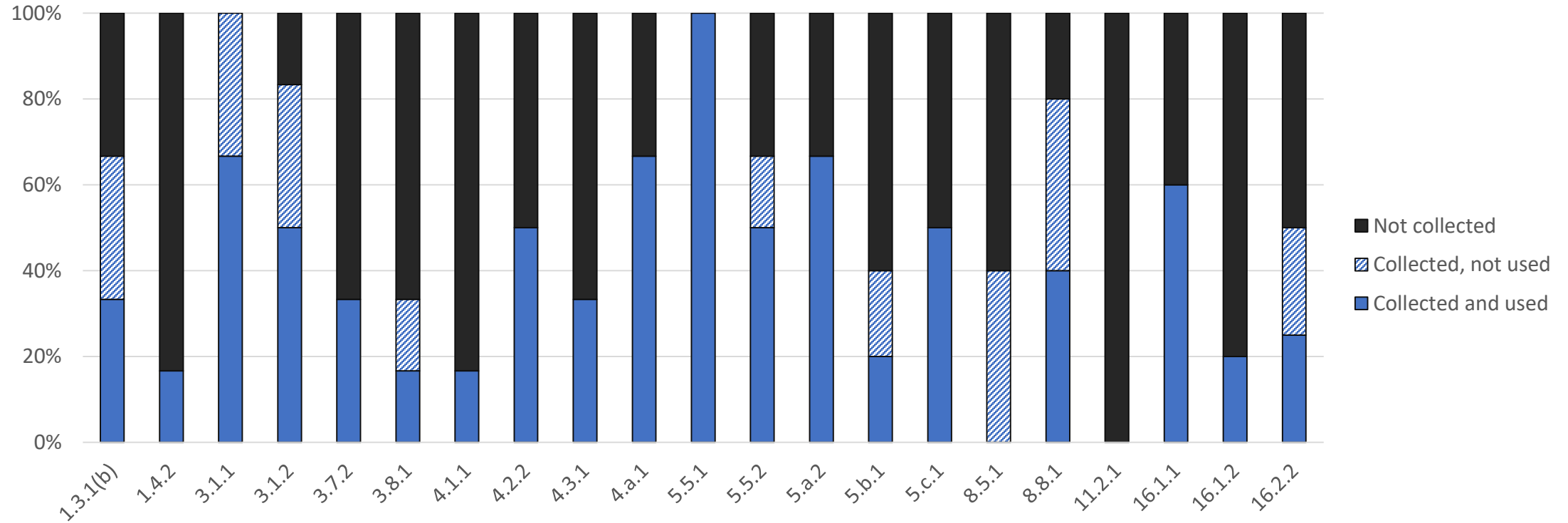
# Prioritization of indicators informing assessment of suitability of admin data for SDG gender reporting



- Gender-specific indicators as defined by UN Women (54)
- Indicators that are suitable for collection through administrative data sources (36)
- Indicators that are conceptually clear, and for which established methods and standards are available (21)

Circle labels (from outer to inner):
- Gender-specific SDG indicators
- Suitable for collection through ADS
- Tier I & II
- Child-focused (illustrative)

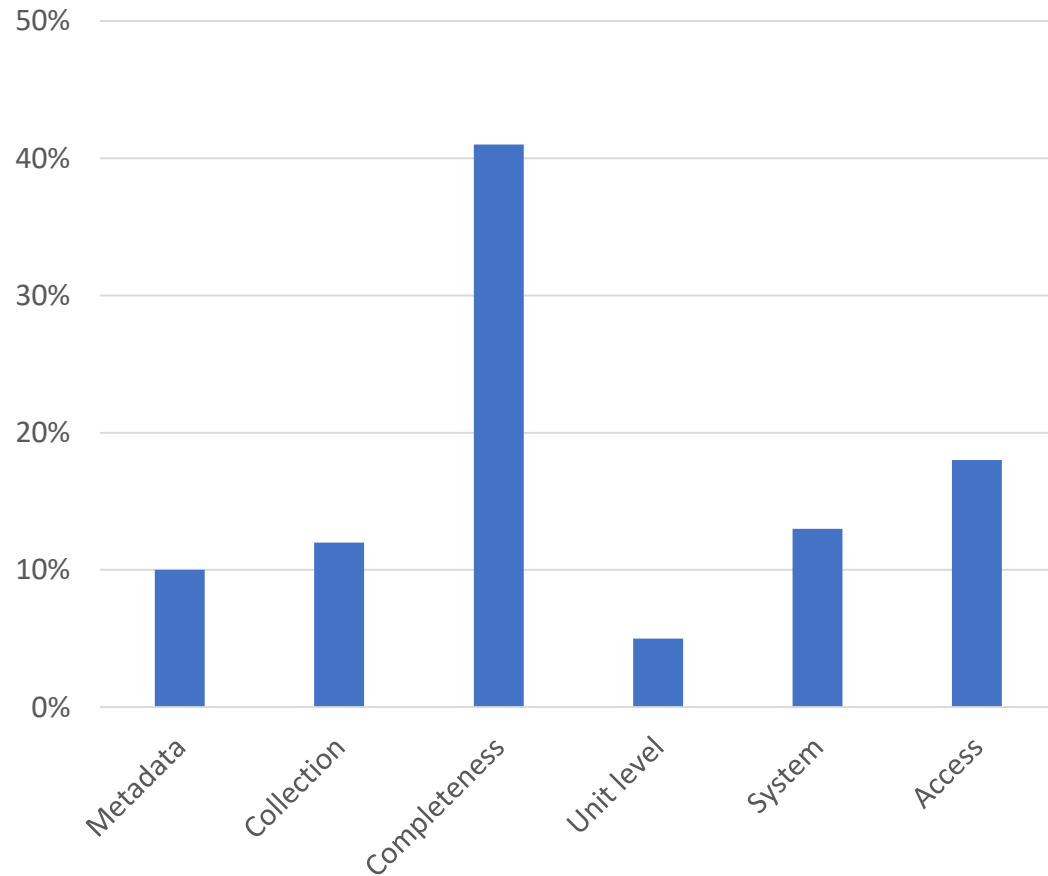# Among IAEG-GS Advisory Group Member Countries...



Proportion of countries collecting 21 gender-specific SDG indicators through admin data systems, by collection and use status

# Issues and challenges with sourcing SDG gender indicators from admin data

| Goal | Indicator | Reasons provided for not using admin data |
|------|-----------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1 Poverty | 1.3.1 Social protection | Requires inputs/linkages of multiple agencies |
|  | 1.4.2 Secure tenure rights | Inclusion of 'perception' makes it difficult to use admin data – how could admin systems capture this? |
| 3 Health | 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate | - |
|  | 3.8.1 Essential health services | Indicator is very broad with several sources of data |
| 4 Education | 4.1.1 Minimum proficiency | Difficulties with standardisation due to use of different learning assessments through the country |
|  | 4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning | - |
|  | 4.3.1 Youth and adults in education | Prefer to use surveys |
| 5 Gender | 5.b.1 Mobile phone ownership | The data are owned by private companies |
|  | 5.c.1 Systems to track pub. allocat.. | Indicator is 'proportion of countries', unclear what raw data is required |
| 8 Work | 8.5.1 Hourly earnings | Admin data often don't track hours worked (just earnings) |
| 11 Cities | 11.2.1 Public transport | Inclusion of 'convenient transit' makes it difficult to use admin data – how is this defined? |
| 16 Justice | 16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths | - |
|  | 16.2.2 Human trafficking | - |

# Identified challenges to using admin data for SDG gender indicators



- Most pressing data quality issue – completeness (41%)
  - Concerns that admin data represent a small proportion of total population or total number of events
- Next issue – data access (18%)
  - Collected but not shared
- Very few reported that data aren't being collected at the right unit level to allow for the compilation of gender statistics

# Are there challenges specific to, or more pronounced, for generating gender statistics from admin data?

- In large part, no…
  - Challenges mostly relate to digitization, protection of personal information, standardisation of concepts/definitions, lack of metadata, no sharing, dysfunctional systems, coordination bottlenecks
  - If only 'sex' is needed, it is among the easier disaggregation variables to capture (e.g. compared to disability or migratory status) and less sensitive than race/ethnicity
  - Sex can be cross-tabulated with other disaggregates in core admin systems
- However…
  - To the extent that women/girls are less likely to have IDs or access services, they are less likely to be captured by admin data
    - Potential selective under-coverage by sex
  - Unless specifically serving gender diverse populations, admin systems lack ability to capture non-binary genders or trans persons
  - If gender-sensitive information beyond sex is needed, it is challenging to include new questions in admin forms

# What other gender data from admin sources should we be taking advantage of for programming and results?

Importance of admin data at (sub)national level:

- While admin data may not adhere to statistical standards/concepts, they can provide useful information to policymakers given their frequency/detail

- Essential for planning and delivering gender-responsive services to communities
  - In this sense, admin data doesn't need to be internationally comparable – needs to be locally specific

- Valuable for monitoring changes over time/progress toward gender equality outcomes measured once every 3-10 years in household surveys
  - Essential for informing why some outcomes were (or weren't) achieved – what resources were allocated, what services were provided, etc.?

# Examples

- Proportion of adolescent girls and women (aged 15-49 years) who have their needs for family planning satisfied with modern methods
  - Use of admin data:
    - To assess availability and utilisation of services to provide access to contraception and SRH education
    - For analysis of barriers restricting women's access (i.e. marital status, parental consent requirements, age restrictions) – understanding the legal and regulatory framework
    - Resources allocated (funds, human resources, etc.)
- Proportion of girls who have undergone FGM
  - Use of admin data:
    - Resources allocated (funds, human resources, etc.)
    - Types of services available and utilisation
    - Estimation of the types of FGM and pattern of service utilisation (from health and medical records, police records) – is the system responding adequately?

# Preliminary recommendations

- Admin data systems are a key (untapped) source of gender data and further investment should be encouraged to improve availability/use

- Admin data are not a replacement for survey data in key areas (particularly for international monitoring) but a complement
  - Can't measure perceptions/behaviors or provide meaningful insight into certain phenomenon

- Disaggregation of data in administrative systems should focus on providing the ability to cross-tabulate by multiple dimensions
  - In mature systems, this will mean individual data records that can be linked across key elements
  - For less mature systems – clear recommendations on critical cross-tabulations are required (need for prioritization to avoid "fruitless disaggregation")

# Preliminary recommendations (2)

- Priority should be given to strengthening sectoral admin data systems of most relevance to gender equality outcomes, including:
  - Education sector: learning outcomes, progression, school retention
  - Health/social welfare: adolescent childbearing, access to family services/support
  - CRVS and identification: birth registration, single parent registration, marital registration, access to formal ID, etc.
- Efforts should take advantage of existing system investments rather than engage as "stand-alone" components
  - Requires clear articulation of priority gender data needs by sectoral system

# Next steps – case studies

Case studies – semi-structured interviews with NSOs and key line ministries to unpack key issues, challenges and opportunities

- Challenges
  - Completeness of data – are data incomplete at point of collection or vis-à-vis what gets shared/published? How do we build confidence in the data?
  - Aggregation – what processes/infrastructure need to be put in place to ensure that individual records are not lost as data go 'up the chain' – (e.g. immunization) or in the move from paper to digital registers (Morocco)?
  - Admin forms – ensuring essential gender information is collected
    - What role can NSOs play in the development of best practice guidelines for sectoral admin data systems?

# Next steps - case studies (2)

Opportunities to leverage systems improvements to yield better gender data

- What admin systems should be prioritized and why?
  - What criteria should be used to prioritize investments?
- Are there basic disaggregation tabulations that should be built into admin systems? What are the most important cross-tabs?
- How can gender statisticians engage in broader admin data processes to ensure that gender data needs are reflected?
  - Is there a clear institutional owner for the work needed to be done?
  - How do gender statisticians engage with line ministries? Do better coordination mechanisms need to be put in place?
  - What capacity building is needed?

# Next steps

- Review and finalization of guidance

- Peer-reviewed article - key challenges and future opportunities for the use of administrative data (co-authored by IAEG-GS Advisory Group)

- Identification of additional potential work for IAEG-GS to support (beyond scope of current workstream)
  - National ID systems – inclusion, outreach, more being counted
  - Data linkage (for what? across systems/ between types of data?)
  - Geographic data from admin data systems – sub national analysis (improve cross tab analysis)
  - Other?

# NSO Experiences
# (Morocco & Jordan)

# THANK YOU

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