

Gender Statistics Programme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

This paper is providing an overview of the activities of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in gender statistics. It complements the programme review of gender statistics contained in document E/CN.3/2011/3.

The paper highlights the knowledge sharing at biannual UNECE work sessions on gender statistics, the methodological work accomplished by task forces, the UNECE Gender Statistics Database, the extensive training delivered to national statistical offices and the training materials developed for this purpose, including the manual “Developing gender statistics: a practical tool” that has an acknowledged global importance. It concludes with summarizing the advantages of regional cooperation for strengthening gender statistics.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has been among the forerunners in advancing gender statistics. Since 1985, biannual work sessions on gender statistics have provided a sustainable platform for exchange of good practice and methodological work, reflecting the interest and commitment that UNECE member countries have shown to engendering their statistical systems.
2. Governed by the Conference of European Statisticians (the UNECE committee on statistics) and its Bureau, current UNECE work on gender statistics is coordinated by the Steering Group on Gender Statistics that includes representatives from eight national statistical offices and five international organizations. It advises on the organization of meetings and workshops and on the establishment of task forces on specific issues.
3. At its 58th plenary session in June 2010, the Conference of European Statisticians recognized the need to continue work on gender statistics involving the high level of expertise available in member countries. In November 2010, the Bureau of the Conference approved the continuation of the mandates of the Steering Group on Gender Statistics and the Task Force on Gender-based Violence, and approved the terms of reference of a new Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality.
4. This paper is providing an overview of UNECE work in gender statistics, complementing the presented global programme review¹.

II. KNOWLEDGE SHARING: biannual work sessions on gender statistics

5. The biannual UNECE work sessions on gender statistics have been reviewing ways of measuring progress towards gender equality for a quarter of a century. These three-day work sessions provide a forum for member countries to exchange experience, to bring up methodological issues that need to be tackled at the international level and to identify emerging new issues. They also provide recommendations for the work in the inter-session period. The work sessions are open to all member countries of the Conference of European Statisticians, which, in addition to UNECE countries include all member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and all major international organizations active in statistics.
6. The 2010 work session² brought together gender statistics focal points from 30 countries and 6 organizations. It discussed the measurement of gender differences in economic security, including the gender pay gap, population censuses as an information source for gender issues, new information needs on emerging patterns in gender-specific responses to the economic crisis, new on-line and interactive web tools for disseminating gender data, and results from recent time use surveys. For future work, the session recommended to identify key gender indicators related to internationally agreed policy goals and to develop a framework for grouping indicators by domains and a hierarchy of indicators. This has led to the establishment of a new Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality (see section III.C).

¹ E/CN.3/2011/3

² <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.04.gender.htm>

III. METHODOLOGICAL WORK: manual, survey tools, indicators

A. Gender statistics manual

7. The UNECE Task Force on Gender Statistics Training for Statisticians (set up in 2005) has assisted national statistical offices in integrating gender perspective into their data collection, processing and dissemination. It developed the manual “Developing gender statistics: a practical tool”³, which aims to guide statistical organizations in the production and use of gender statistics. The manual is a consolidated reference for any organization or individual interested in producing information about gender differences. It guides producers of gender statistics and assists in improving the availability of high-quality information on women and men. In addition to the Task Force, a number of independent experts and experts from international organizations were engaged in its preparation. The World Bank has provided financial support to this work.

8. At its 58th plenary session in June 2010, the Conference of European Statisticians endorsed the manual and noted its great practical value. It is currently available in English; the Russian version is in print. The World Bank is planning to translate the manual into other languages and use it as a training material in other regions of the world.

B. Gender-based violence

9. The UNECE Task Force on the Measurement of Gender-based Violence (set up in 2005) aims at improving and harmonizing statistics on gender-based violence. Its activities have been closely linked to the global effort of developing indicators on violence against women coordinated by the Friends of the Chair group of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). Since 2009, UNECE has participated together with the other United Nations Regional Commissions in an inter-regional project funded from the United Nations Development Account, which has supported this work.

10. The Task Force guided the development of a survey module⁴ designed for collecting data on the set of indicators agreed upon by UNSC. The module is expected to become a standard data collection tool on violence against women for national statistical offices worldwide. Four countries have tested the module so far. It is planned to be finalised in 2011 based on further pilot tests in other countries.

C. Indicators of gender equality

11. The 2010 UNECE work session on gender statistics recognized that the need to monitor progress towards internationally agreed gender-related policy objectives has led to a proliferation of gender-sensitive indicators. Therefore, it is important to review these indicators and identify the key measures that UNECE countries would be able to produce. Such a review would assess the indicators’ suitability for describing major gender inequalities, for monitoring gender-relevant policies, their regular availability and comparability across countries.

12. The UNECE Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality was set up in 2010 to tackle these issues. It aims to develop a framework for grouping the indicators by domain and structuring them into headline and supporting indicators, and to propose measurement approaches where internationally consistent measures are lacking. The work is scheduled to be completed in 2012.

³ <http://www.unece.org/stats/publ.htm>

⁴ <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/VAW>

IV. DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION: database

13. The UNECE Gender Statistics Database⁵ provides a framework of statistical indicators on gender-relevant issues, and data for monitoring the situation of women and men in UNECE member countries and for evaluating effectiveness of policies. It was launched in 2003 and is available in English and Russian. The PC-Axis platform of the Database provides users much flexibility in customizing their queries and downloads.

14. The topics covered in the Database include: population, fertility, families and households, work and the economy, education, public life and decision-making, health and mortality, crime and violence, science and information and communication technology, and work-life balance. National statistical offices supply most of the data. Where available, sources from other international organizations are used.

V. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: training tools, workshops

15. In cooperation and with financial support from the World Bank, UNECE has been carrying out a multi-year programme on capacity development in gender statistics since 2006. The programme has improved the availability and quality of data for developing, monitoring, and evaluating gender policies in countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. It has also improved the capacity of users to utilize gender statistics for policymaking. In this programme, UNECE has developed training modules consisting of multimedia presentations and practical exercises for use in training events. Training videos⁶ on 11 key topics in gender statistics are currently available in English and Russian.

16. The training tools as well as the recently completed gender statistics manual (see section III.A) have been used in many sub-regional and national training workshops organized in this capacity development programme (see Table). These demand-driven workshops have brought together producers and users of statistics to discuss and learn how to engender a national statistical system, to strengthen sub-regional and national networks and to support development of national action plans.

17. Countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia have repeatedly expressed the need for continuing training in gender statistics, in particular for sub-regional events involving both statisticians and users of gender statistics. In view of the wealth of training materials prepared in recent years and the enhanced expertise on gender statistics available in many member countries, UNECE is well positioned to continue the training activities in countries with developing statistical systems.

VI. CONCLUSION

18. The activities on gender statistics in the UNECE region are demand-driven and rely on the commitment of national statistical offices to engender their statistical systems. The success of the UNECE Task Forces is determined by the contributions from experts of national statistical offices and the leadership they provide. The success of capacity development depends on the national statistical offices' commitment to learning and implementation. Steered by UNECE, cooperation in gender

⁵ <http://w3.unece.org/pxweb>

⁶ <http://www.unece.org/stats/video>

statistics among countries of the region has proven successful. Strengthening such regional cooperation among member countries is thus an important factor in the further development of gender statistics.

19. Advantages of regional and sub-regional cooperation are also related to the effectiveness of exchange of experience among manageable number of actors with a certain level of homogeneity. Countries with similar concerns can gain much from working together towards a common objective. The region-specific expertise on gender statistics accumulated in the United Nations Regional Commissions can further strengthen their role in providing a platform for cooperation.

Table: Gender statistics training activities organized by UNECE from 2007 to 2010

	Activity	Venue	Date
1	Regional training of trainers workshop	Almaty, Kazakhstan	23-27 Apr 2007
2	National workshop on gender statistics	Astana, Kazakhstan	21 Jun 2007
3	National workshop on gender statistics	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	23-26 Jun 2007
4	National workshop on gender statistics	Vadul lui Voda, Republic of Moldova	4-5 Oct 2007
5	National workshop on gender statistics	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	29 Oct 2007
6	National workshop on gender-based violence	Astana, Kazakhstan	26-29 Nov 2007
7	Regional workshop on national gender statistics training programs	Rome, Italy	13-14 Dec 2008
8	National workshop on the gender perspective in labour statistics	Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina	5-7 Feb 2008
9	National workshop on measuring informal employment	Astana, Kazakhstan	12-13 May 2008
10	Study tour on informal employment for two Tajik statistical office staff to the Republic of Moldova	Chisinau, Republic of Moldova	10-13 Aug 2008
11	Workshop on national gender statistics training programmes	Geneva, Switzerland	9-10 Oct 2008
12	National workshop on gender statistics	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	24-26 Mar 2009
13	National workshop on measuring violence against women	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	22 May 2009
14	National workshop on gender statistics	Dushanbe, Tajikistan	28-29 Jul 2009
15	Sub-regional workshop on the challenges and lessons learned in engendering national statistical systems	Skopje, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	15-17 Feb 2010
16	Regional workshop on measuring violence against women	Geneva, Switzerland	29-30 Apr 2010
17	National workshop on gender statistics	Belgrade, Serbia	18-19 May 2010
18	Sub-regional workshop on gender statistics	Tbilisi, Georgia	27-29 Sep 2010
19	National workshop on gender statistics	Durrës, Albania	7-9 Dec 2010

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