



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 December 2015

Original: English

Statistical Commission

Forty-seventh session

8-11 March 2016

Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Items for information: gender statistics

Gender statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2015/216. It provides a summary of the recent activities undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics under the umbrella of the Global Gender Statistics Programme, including the preparation of *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*, and the implementation of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project. It also reports on the work undertaken to finalize the International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics, the organization of the ninth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the ongoing dissemination of data and metadata through the minimum set of gender indicators portal. The Commission is invited to take note of the ongoing work and future priorities on gender statistics.

* E/CN.3/2016/1.



I. Introduction

1. The present report sets forth the work undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to assess progress achieved towards gender equality over the past 20 years, as presented in *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*. It also reports on the activities carried out by the Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics in 2015 to fulfil the requests of the Statistical Commission contained in decisions 42/102 and 44/109, including: (a) developing methodological guidelines for the production and use of gender statistics, including on the measurement of asset ownership and entrepreneurship under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project; (b) serving as the coordination mechanism for the global programme on gender statistics; and (c) maintaining and updating the minimum set of gender indicators agreed by the Commission as a guide for the national production and international compilation of gender statistics.

II. *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*

2. The Statistics Division published *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*, the sixth issue of that publication, as called for in the Beijing Platform for Action.¹ The publication presents the most recent statistics and analysis on the status of women and men around the world in several broad areas of policy concern, as well as progress since 1995.

3. *The World's Women 2015* highlights the fact that while progress towards the goal of gender equality has been made in the past two decades in most areas of concern, it has been made at a low and uneven pace. Through a life cycle approach, the publication reveals the challenges and specific needs experienced by women during the different stages of life. The different trajectories of women and men, from childhood through the working and reproductive stage to older age, are highlighted in the analysis undertaken in eight chapters of the report, each representing a broad area of concern: population and families; health; education; work; power and decision-making; violence against women; environment; and poverty. A wide selection of statistics and indicators is covered in the publication and in its statistical annex (both available online at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/worldswomen.html>).

4. The publication reveals that the lives of women have improved in some respects. For instance, the gender gap in education has narrowed, particularly at the primary level, and in many countries women now outnumber men in tertiary education. In other areas, however, progress has stagnated. Today, half the world's women join the labour force compared to three quarters of men, a situation not unlike that of 20 years ago. Women are far from having an equal voice to men in public and private spheres, and in every region of the world, women are still subjected to various forms of violence. Women also face new challenges, including those related to changes in living arrangements. As a result, older women today are more likely to be living alone and in poverty than men of the same age.

¹ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 208.

5. The publication was launched on 20 October 2015, World Statistics Day, and received widespread media attention. Its key findings were covered by top-tier news services such as Reuters, Agence France-Presse, Inter Press Service, Agencia EFE, Xinhua News Agency, Al-Jazeera, Les Echos (France), Voice of America, *The New York Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, as well as by women's magazines like *Marie Claire* and other local outlets. Overall, more than 70 news agencies around the world dedicated articles to the publication. Topics highlighted in the media included progress on gender equality made in the past 20 years, the link between the publication and the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, violence against women as a global challenge and the need for better statistics to measure gender equality.

6. Furthermore, the Governments of Japan and Mexico hosted a side event in New York on the occasion of the launch of the publication on 20 October 2015. Organized as a panel discussion on "Measuring the progress of the world's women", the event brought together more than 100 people to review and discuss gender issues and statistics, including on women and health in Japan and violence against women in Mexico.

III. Development of methodological guidelines and statistical standards

Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project

7. As reported in previous sessions of the Commission,² the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project seeks to accelerate existing efforts to generate comparable gender indicators on health, education, employment, entrepreneurship and asset ownership. Building on the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, the project is jointly executed by the Statistics Division and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

8. During its first three years of implementation, the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project has: (a) compiled and disseminated data and metadata on education, employment and health through an online platform, in line with the minimum set of gender indicators;³ (b) developed draft guidelines on measuring entrepreneurship and asset ownership from a gender perspective; and (c) conducted pilot surveys in five countries to test the guidelines and refine the methodologies for collecting data on entrepreneurship and asset ownership at the individual level.

9. In terms of methodological development, the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project has prepared draft guidelines on collecting data on asset ownership at the individual level and on gender and entrepreneurship. The draft guidelines, which address conceptual and measurement issues and propose survey questions, have been tested in five pilot countries — Georgia, Mexico, Mongolia, the Philippines and Uganda — and lessons learned from those countries will be used to guide additional pilots in 2016 and the final revision of the guidelines, expected to be presented to the Statistical Commission for adoption in 2017.

² See E/CN.3/2013/10, E/CN.3/2014/18 and E/CN.3/2015/21.

³ Accessible at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/default.htm>.

10. The first Evidence and Data for Gender Equality pilot survey was conducted in Uganda in 2014 in collaboration with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study programme.⁴ A comprehensive analysis of the survey results was carried out in 2015, and the findings helped in the formulation of the survey instrument piloted in Georgia, Mongolia and the Philippines in 2015. Those three countries, with funding from the Asian Development Bank, conducted stand-alone surveys to collect detailed information on asset ownership and entrepreneurship at the individual level and to test the feasibility and value added of interviewing three adult household members. The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project provided technical support to the pilot survey on sampling and questionnaire designs and co-delivered the training of enumerators in each of the three countries. Data collection concluded in October 2015 and is currently being analysed. An additional pilot survey was conducted in Mexico. The Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, which funded the pilot, appended the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality module on a core set of assets to its National Household Survey. A training of enumerators was co-delivered by the Instituto Nacional and the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project in June 2015. Data collection concluded in September. The data is currently being analysed.

11. The project has been extended for two additional years, until the end of 2017. During that period, the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project will continue its work on: (a) piloting the project's methodologies in other countries and analysing the data collected; (b) finalizing the methodologies; and (c) providing technical assistance to countries that are interested in collecting data on entrepreneurship and asset ownership and control from a gender perspective.

International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics

12. The Statistics Division continues to work on the finalization of the International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics based on: the outcomes of the Expert Group Meeting on the Revision of the Trial International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics, held in New York from 11 to 13 June 2012; the adoption of the new resolution on work statistics, employment and labour underutilization at the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, held in Geneva from 2 to 11 October 2013; and comments received from national statistical offices. Once finalized, the outcome document will be presented to the Statistical Commission for adoption as the International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics.

IV. Ninth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics

13. The co-chairs of the Advisory Group on Emerging Issues of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the Statistics Division held several virtual meetings in 2015 to: (a) discuss the contribution and position of the Inter-Agency Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators; (b) take stock of progress in the implementation of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project and the

⁴ See E/CN.3/2012/2721, para. 8.

finalization of the International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics; and (c) agree on future priority areas of work. In 2015, the Group reviewed data collected by the Statistics Division for the preparation of *The World's Women 2015*, contributed to the preparation of a note on the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and on the selection of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals and assisted the Division in the finalization of the International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics.

14. The ninth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, held in Bangkok on 29 and 30 October 2015, was attended by a total of 36 participants from international agencies, regional commissions and national statistical offices. The meeting reviewed the preliminary Sustainable Development Goal indicators under Goal 5, Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, proposed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators at its second meeting, held from 26 to 28 October. The review was carried out from a technical perspective, with the objective of highlighting the need for rephrasing or for addressing technical inconsistencies in the indicators. The proposed indicators were further classified into three tiers according to the agreed tiers system. The meeting also took note of work programmes and initiatives being undertaken by the members of the Inter-Agency Group on Gender Statistics to strengthen gender statistics at the international, regional and national levels.

15. The meeting agreed on its 2016 annual programme of work, which includes:

(a) For the Statistics Division, as secretariat, to forward the technical comments provided by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics on Sustainable Development Goal 5 indicators to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators;

(b) For the secretariat and the Chair of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, to establish working groups to: (i) map/identify gender-relevant indicators in the remaining Sustainable Development Goals; (ii) assess the impact of the final Sustainable Development Goal indicators on the minimum set of gender indicators; and (iii) prepare terms of reference to develop standards and methods to produce gender-relevant tier 3 indicators. The members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics will participate in and contribute to those work streams.

16. At the meeting it was also agreed to convene the tenth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the sixth Global Forum on Gender Statistics in Finland in 2016.

V. Online dissemination of the minimum set of gender indicators

17. In its decision 44/109, the Statistical Commission agreed on the use of the minimum set of gender indicators as a guide for the national production and international compilation of gender statistics. The Statistics Division continues to maintain and update the dedicated web platform developed to disseminate the indicator online (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/default.html>). In 2015, the data platform was upgraded to enhance user experience through increased browsing speed and interactive features. As of December 2015, the latest updates for the

45 quantitative and 10 qualitative indicators under tier 1 and tier 2, covering dimensions such as education, employment, health, human rights of women and girls, and public life and decision-making, are disseminated through the portal. The addition of tier 2 indicators to the online portal was a decision made by the Advisory Group on Emerging Issues during the 2014 meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics.

18. The minimum set of gender indicators is based on data produced by countries, compiled by the specialized agencies and forwarded together with appropriate metadata to the Statistics Division. For certain series, the specialized agencies adjust the data to ensure international comparability, whereas for others, the agencies develop their own estimates based on country data. Detailed metadata, including an explanation of the sources of data and methods used by the specialized agencies, are available at the dedicated data portal, together with the relevant data.

VI. The way forward

19. In 2016, under the Global Gender Statistics Programme, the work of the Statistics Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics will include: the ongoing online dissemination of the minimum set of gender indicators, activities related to Sustainable Development Goal indicators agreed upon by the Group at its ninth meeting, and the activities under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project.

20. The Statistics Division, in collaboration with experts from national and international agencies and research institutes, will also continue to work on the International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics.

21. Lastly, the Statistics Division, in collaboration with Statistics Finland and relevant agencies and development partners, will convene the tenth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the sixth Global Forum on Gender Statistics in 2016.

VII. Summary and conclusions

22. The Statistical Commission is invited to take note of the work carried out by the Statistics Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics during 2015 in implementing the requests made by the Commission at its forty-second session on the improvement of gender statistics.