IN BRIEF: AFRICA

MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT

In Africa, work on gender statistics aims to ensure that commitments to international and regional conventions, treaties and protocols, including Africa's Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are well monitored and gender equality policies are informed by evidence. The Women Count Africa regional project focuses on the three main outcomes of the Women Count global programme, taking into consideration the specific context of the African region. The goal of the project are twofold: i) to provide technical assistance on gender statistics to UN Women's country offices in order to foster a gender-responsive national SDG monitoring; and ii) to strengthen regional-level coordination and collaboration with key partners to help contribute to regional-level monitoring of the 2063 Agenda and the SDGs.

To inform the development of the regional project, an assessment of the gender statistics initiatives of key stakeholders in the region was conducted between

July and September 2017 to ascertain the region's current ability and practices to produce and use gender statistics. The assessment helped to identify gaps and challenges, existing opportunities and entry points for UN Women's two regional offices (covering East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa) to support member states and other regional partners to advance gender statistics in the region. The project is also informed by a regional workshop that brought together users and producers organized by UN Women, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) in November 2017 (see the 2017 Annual Report).

1. Creating an enabling environment

The production and use of gender data, in some regions, is affected by social norms, cultural background, religious beliefs, and attitudes towards gender equality. This is especially the case with regards to culturally sensitive themes such as unpaid care and domestic work, violence against women,

women's participation in decision making, access to health services, and maternal health care and family planning. At national level, inadequate technical expertise and the limited number of gender specialists are compounded by acute funding constraints for gender data collection and use, inadequate technical capacity among regional development partners, and weak communication and coordination among actors supporting gender statistics. Regional stakeholders articulated the need for UN Women to support countries to identify and address institutional, legal and financial constraints to ensure mainstreaming of gender statistics into the national statistical system (NSS) and to establish an efficient monitoring and evaluation system for the SDGs and the 2063 Agenda.

Women Count response: In close collaboration with regional actors, particularly UNECA and AfDB, partnerships and coordination of strategic guidance will be enhanced, advocacy for better gender data will be conducted, and training and capacity-development strengthened. Regional coordination will also be improved by strengthening technically and financially the African Group on Gender Statistics (AGGeS), which was established by the Africa Statistical Commission to guide the development of gender statistics in the region. As the region with the most pathfinder countries (six in total), fostering learning and south-south collaboration is a key priority for the region and will be facilitated through the collection, codification and dissemination of best practices.

2. Increasing data production

National statistical offices (NSO) interviewed for the assessment highlighted the following problems that affect gender data production: poor appreciation of the importance of gender statistics among both policy makers and statisticians; lack of clear and harmonized concepts, definitions and methodologies for producing gender statistics; inadequate staffing/gender statisticians and poor technical capacity of statisticians to produce gender statistics; paucity of surveys that concentrate solely on gender issues (e.g. standalone violence against women and girls surveys), and poor integration of gender statistics into ongoing statistical activities, such as census or large scale multi-purpose

surveys. Another critical challenge in the region is the fragmentation of gender data production across sectors and poorly developed administrative data systems. Where data exist, they either do not contain most of the required gender-sensitive indicators and most often analyses conducted by countries do not consider all possible and relevant gender indicators that could be generated from such data. Many of the regional actors attributed this worrying situation to the fact that data collected are not thoroughly analysed because of inadequate staffing or poor technical capacity as well as poor funding.

Women Count response: Priorities for addressing gender data gaps in Africa include producing data on violence against women and girls, unpaid care work, gaps in access to decent work and pay, participation in public life and decision-making, and access to and use of information and communications technologies. Efforts to improve data production will be structured around the three tier levels of the SDG indicators. Strengthening national capacities to produce national Tier I indicators with the appropriate level of disaggregation will be the top priority, followed closely by supporting new data collection activities to produce Tier II indicators and methodological development.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

Due to the on-going challenges in gender data production, evidence-based reporting on progress made in the implementation of regional and global frameworks developed with the aim of improving gender equality and women's empowerment is weak. Even when the data is produced, accessibility remains a major challenge, with patterns of dissemination varying greatly among African countries. While some use a range of dissemination mechanisms (e.g. website, reports, dissemination workshops, electronic media publications), many sporadically produce only a "women and men" report, which may be available in hard copy but inaccessible online or through dedicated Gender Information Systems. While a vibrant civil society community that works on data exists in the region (particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa), there is very little interaction between them and data producers, further limiting data use.

Women Count response: Interventions include supporting countries to make gender statistics accessible to all users, including governments, civil society, academia and the private sector through the provision of advocacy materials to encourage increased dissemination of data and microdata and assisting countries to facilitate data flows to regional and global SDG-related databases. In addition to supporting analysis of gender data to inform research, advocacy, policies and programmes, and to promote accountability, developing the capacity of NSSs to communicate gender statistics and to better understand users' needs and developing methods such as infographics, data visualization and narratives will be prioritized.

Key Achievements in 2018

Due to limited funding in 2018, the Women Count Africa project only undertook a limited set of activities. Funds secured towards the end of 2018, mean that full-scale implementation of activities and the recruitment of two regional statistical advisors (based in Dakar, Senegal and Nairobi, Kenya) will take place beginning in 2019. Despite these financial constraints, several achievements can be cited in 2018:

- In addition to supporting pathfinder countries in the region, UN Women's East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) supported three non-path-finder countries (Rwanda, Ethiopia and Mozambique) to develop gender statistics plans. In Ethiopia, the resulted was the development of a project that is aligned with the Women Count approach and over $1.5 million secured for its implementation.

- UN Women ESARO co-organized (with UNECA and AfDB) in September 2018 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, a Regional Consultative Workshop on Gender Statistics to enhance the capacity of Member States on gender statistics. The workshop led to the review and endorsement of the work on gender statistics in the region by African member states, including the Women Count Africa project and the AfDB-ECA Africa Gender Index as well as to the revival of the

AGGeS. The workshop also provided an opportunity review the Africa Programme on Gender Statistics (APGS) 2017-2018 and 2019-2021 workplan and to train participants on topics related to violence against women and girls (VAWG) measurement and time use surveys, both of which are regional priorities. ESARO facilitated the participation of 31 workshop participants (close to half of the total) from NSOs, Ministries of Gender and UN Women offices.

- UN Women commissioned an assessment of the kinds of programmatic and citizen-generated data (CGD) that exist in the region to support the generation of gender statistics, assess their quality and establish minimum requirements for collecting such data. The report, which will be peer-reviewed and finalized in 2019, will serve as a key input for the planned dialogue between national statistical offices and non-official data producers, including civil society organisations. A partnership with the Africa Monitor is producing a 10-country citizen generated data report which will present actual data collected by citizens on selected SDGs.

- UN Women signed an MOU with the SDGs Centre for Africa with an aim of increasing gender statistics for reporting on the SDGs. A dialogue forum, organized in collaboration with SDGs Center brought together officials of national statistical offices and data producing civil society organizations discussing the use of complimentary data in national reporting and policy making. This dialogue led to commitments by three pathfinder countries – Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda - to consider the use of complementary data.

- Co-organized by UN Women and the Governments of Uganda and of Ethiopia, a side event was held at the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, "Harnessing 'Citizen Generated Data' for Effective Monitoring and Reporting of SDG Goal 5 and Other Gender-Related SDGs Indicators: Challenges and Opportunities." The side event created awareness on working with non-state actors to produce, analyse and use gender statistics to inform policies, programmes and to track progress on gender equality.

Plans for 2019

In 2019, Women Count Africa project activities will include:

Enabling environment

- Recruiting staff and revise the regional project document to reflect new developments in the region;

- Providing technical and financial support to countries that are undertaking national gender statistics assessments and mapping data needs for SDGs monitoring (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe);

- Participating in the meetings of the AGGeS and develop joint annual work plans aligned with activities of key partners on gender statistics;

- Building regional partnerships through UN Women participation in the meetings of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) and the Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa (SDG-Africa) to identify opportunities to implement and align Women Count activities with the work of other agencies;

- Supporting NSOs to mainstream gender in statistical business processes, including through compilation and/or harmonization of toolkits and training resources;

- Supporting the development of tools and guidelines for using CGD and programme data for SDGs monitoring;

- Facilitating South-South cooperation, including through organizing an international study tour for pathfinder countries.

Data production

- Providing technical assistance and coordination support to Women Count pathfinder countries and to non-pathfinder countries;

- Partnering with UNECA and the AGGeS to contribute to the development of a Minimum Set of Gender Indicators for Africa for submission to the Africa Statistical Commission;

- Supporting data collection in areas identified as priorities by countries, including time use survey and violence against women and girls and identify suitable data sources and provide technical and financial support to collect SDGs Tier I and II indicators in several countries, including Cabo Verde; Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe;

- Partnering with UNECA to support training of data producers in specific gender statistics domains, including on violence against women and girls, unpaid care work, gender gaps in access to decent work and pay, participation in public life and decision-making, and access to and use of information and communication technologies (Cabo Verde, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Malawi).

Data accessibility and use

- Providing technical support for the strengthening of reporting mechanisms by national statistical systems to regional and global level databases (through the use of technological tools and platforms such as the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) and national and regional data portals);

- Working with regional actors to develop strategies for disseminating and communicating gender statistics to policy makers, and develop regional advocacy materials to increase accessibility and use of gender statistics;

- Organizing regional visibility events within inter-governmental processes (e.g. Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development /AU Summits etc.), to promote the use of gender statistics and to improve financing for gender statistics in Africa;

- Supporting to use gender data in policy planning and monitoring and regional and national training workshops to increase data literacy and users' capacity to analyse gender statistics (Cabo Verde, Malawi, Rwanda and Zimbabwe).