MODULE 1

WHAT IS GENDER DATA AND HOW TO USE IT FOR SDG MONITORING?

TRAINING SYLLABUS

Curriculum on Gender Statistics Training

This product was developed under the guidance of the Subgroup on Gender Statistics Training, within the Asia-Pacific Network of Statistical Training Institutes.

Introduction

This syllabus has been designed to guide trainers on how to conduct related training. The syllabus can also be used by learners who wish to know more about this topic and people who are generally interested in gender statistics.

This syllabus is part of a wider module on this area of gender statistics. Other materials within this module might include exercises, sample datasets, PowerPoint presentations and example quizzes. Please refer to the additional set of materials for a comprehensive and effective learning experience.

Who is this module for?

- Statisticians and other experts that wish to understand what gender statistics are and how these can be integrated across different areas of statistics
- Policymakers and decision-makers in general, who are looking to enhance their use of gender data for evidence-based decision-making
- Academics who wish to focus or inform their research through the use of gender data
- Civil society organizations that wish to enhance their use of gender data for advocacy or communication purposes
- Media personnel interested in integrating gender data into their media products and presenting a more accurate and comprehensive picture
- Anyone who wishes to find out what gender data is and how to use it

What do I need to know before going through this module?

This is an introductory module on gender statistics targeted to both experts and non-experts. No advanced knowledge of statistics is necessary. However, it would be good for the learner to have an idea of what the Sustainable Development Goals[1] (SDGs) are, including their targets and indicators[2].

[1] For additional information on the SDGs see: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development- goals/

[2] See: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/

Learning objectives

The expected learning outcomes for this module include:

- After going through this module, the learner is expected to become familiar with the concepts of sex and gender and understand the multidisciplinary nature of gender statistics.
- The module also provides an introduction to gender indicators, particularly in the context of monitoring the SDGs. Therefore, the learner is expected to gain knowledge on how gender statistics can help monitor the SDGs from a gender angle, in the spirit of inclusiveness.
- Finally, trainees will be presented with a brief introduction to some key reasons behind the lack of availability of gender statistics for SDG monitoring in Asia and the Pacific, and recommendations on how to overcome these challenges.

Note to trainer: Depending on the pace of trainer and trainees, it is expected that training for this module can be delivered in 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Contents

1. What are gender statistics?

Gender statistics are defined as statistics that adequately reflect differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men in all areas of life[3]. Gender statistics are defined by the sum of the following characteristics: (a) data are collected and presented with disaggregation by sex as a primary and overall classification; (b) data reflect gender issues; (c) data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives; and (d) data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender biases[4].

Therefore, gender statistics go well beyond just being statistics about women, or sex-disaggregated data. Generally, gender statistics can include:

- Sex-disaggregated data
- Data pertaining specifically to women or to men
- Data that captures specific gender issues – even when these issues do not necessarily mention gender, sex or women and men explicitly

[3] See UNSD. 2008. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/GenderStatManual/What-are-gender-stats.ashx
[4] See UNSD. 2015. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/Glossary.ashx

Sex vs. gender

Although the words 'sex' and 'gender' are often used interchangeably, they mean different things and it is important to choose the right word when discussing sex and/or gender in the context of statistics. Sex refers to the biological and physical differences between women and men.

Gender refers to socially constructed differences in attributes and opportunities associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy and to the social interactions and relations between women and men. Therefore, in the context of statistics, data is often disaggregated by sex, but rarely disaggregated by gender. One exception, for instance, would be data disaggregated by sexual orientation, which would capture gender rather than sex dimensions.*

For instance, statistics on the mortality rates of men and women associated with air pollution are statistics disaggregated by sex. However, the fact that women tend to be disproportionately affected by indoor air pollution – as they tend to be in charge of cooking and spend more time in the household as a result of social norms and traditions – is a gender issue. Thus, statistics on the proportion of households using clean cooking fuels are gender statistics.

Gender statistics might or might not be sex disaggregated. Sex-disaggregated statistics are gender statistics, but gender statistics go well beyond just sex disaggregation!

*Note: Gender identity reflects a deeply felt and personal sense of one's own gender which may or may not correspond to their designated sex at birth[5]. No internationally agreed statistical standard exists to measure gender identity specifically. However, according to other agreed standards, such as that for measuring femicide, when collecting data on people's gender identity, the following categories can be considered: Male gender (Male cisgender, Male transgender), Female gender (Female cisgender, female transgender), Gender diverse, Not application and Not Known[6].
Sexual Orientation refers to people's patterns derived from their sexual attraction, sexual behavior, and/or sexual identity[7]. No internationally agreed statistical standard exists to measure sexual orientation, but the following categories can be used for collecting data sexual orientation: Heterosexual, Homosexual, Bisexual, Other non-conforming sexual orientation, Not applicable and Not Known[8].

[5] Meeting on Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications, UNDESA (2015). https://mdgs.un.org/unsd/classifications/expertgroup/egm2017/ac340-22a.PDF
[6] See Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls. UNODC and UN Women (2022). https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/Statistical_framework_femicide_2022.pdf
[7] Meeting on Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications, UNDESA (2015). https://mdgs.un.org/unsd/classifications/expertgroup/egm2017/ac340-22a.PDF
[8] See Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls. UNODC and UN Women (2022). https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/Statistical_framework_femicide_2022.pdf

Gender statistics can be used to describe each of the dimensions of sustainable development: There are gender statistics that describe economic phenomena (e.g. sex-disaggregated unemployment rates, women's asset-ownership rates, sex-disaggregated poverty rates, etc.), social phenomena (e.g. prevalence rates of intimate partner violence, child marriage rates, proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, etc.) and environmental phenomena (e.g. proportion of women living in households that rely on clean fuels, average time spent on water collection disaggregated by sex, sex-disaggregated rates of engagement in organic agriculture and farming practices, etc.).

2. Gender statistics vs. gender data

As will be discussed in Module 2 of this training curriculum, data are measurements or observations that are collected as a source of information. There are a variety of different types of data and different ways to represent data[9]. Generally, after statisticians compile, manage and analyze raw data, they generate statistics. Therefore, the concept of statistics, technically speaking, refers to numerical data that has been manipulated to generate estimates for a particular country, year and/or population group. For instance, while the process of birth registration might result in a set of data on the individual characteristics of newborns, sex-disaggregated birth registration rates for a certain country are statistics derived from these data.

In practice, however, people often refer to data and statistics interchangeably, as both concepts are closely related. In this training curriculum, both concepts (gender statistics and gender data) are used interchangeably for ease of reference.

3. Gender indicators

Indicators are a quantitative metric that provides information to monitor performance, measure achievement and determine accountability[10]. Gender indicators, therefore, are tools for measuring gender inequalities or gender-specific issues. The use of gender indicators is essential to measure progress achieved towards various forms of commitments – from national strategies and policies to global agreements such as the 2030 Agenda – in an inclusive manner.

4. Using gender data and indicators for SDG monitoring

The *2030 Agenda*, which was adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. At its heart are the 17 SDGs. Each of these goals includes a series of targets. To measure progress towards these targets, more than 200 internationally agreed indicators are used.

The SDGs include a goal on 'Gender Equality and Empowerment of all Women and Girls' (Goal 5). However, gender equality is necessary to achieve all of the goals. For instance, eliminating poverty would be impossible if women – that is, half of the world's population – remain poor. The same argument can be made for all other goals.

[9] See Australian Bureau of Statistics https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/a3121120.nsf/home/statistical+language+-+what+are+data

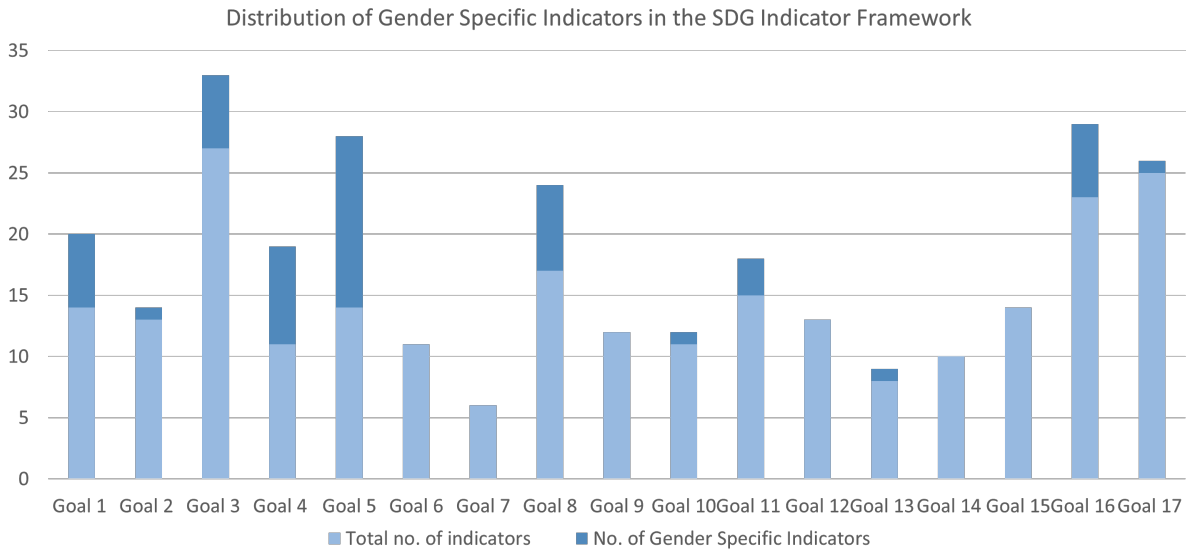
[10] See UNAIDS. https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/sub_landing/files/8_2-Intro-to-IndicatorsFMEF.pdf

Therefore, gender-related issues cut across all SDGs. Similarly, gender indicators are sprinkled across the SDG indicator framework. UN Women considers that there are 53 gender-specific indicators across the framework. This includes indicators that deal with women's issues and indicators that explicitly call for sex-disaggregation. Additionally, the SDG framework includes numerous gender-relevant indicators. That is, indicators that are important for gender equality, even without mentions of gender, women or sex.

Figure 1: Gender issues are cross-cutting to all SDGs

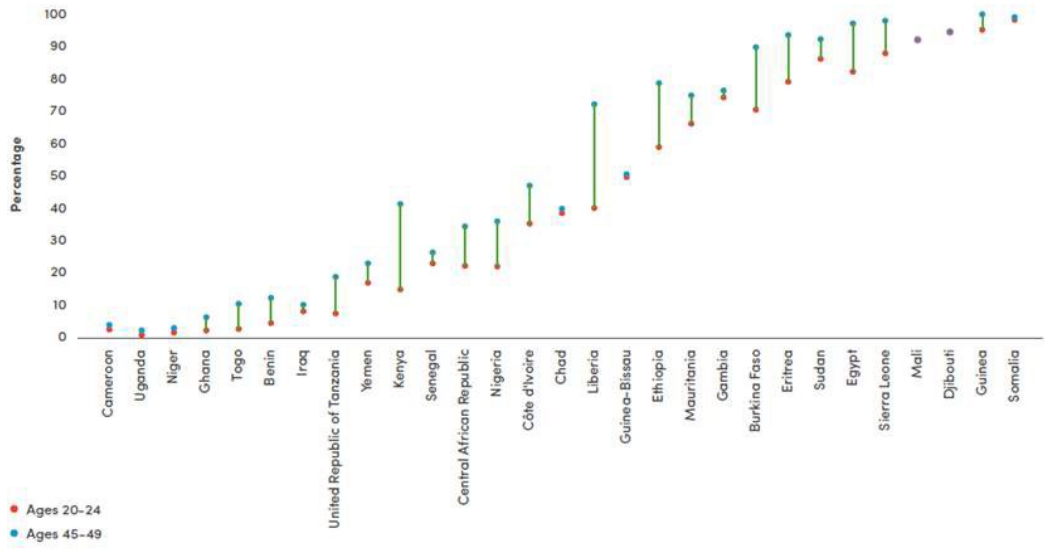
Let's look at some examples of SDG indicators that represent each of the types of gender indicators. The classification below is based on the list of indicators available up to early 2020[11].

[11] See UN Women (2018). Turning Promises into Action. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018#:~:text=Publication%20year%3A%202018&text=The%20report%20monitors%20global%20and,responsive%20policies%20and%20accountability%20processes.



1. Targeted gender-specific indicators: These refer explicitly to issues pertaining to either women or men (e.g. female genital mutilation) and are therefore gender-specific by default[12].

Figure 2: Proportion of women who have undergone FGM by age cohort (20–24 and 45–49), 2004–2016

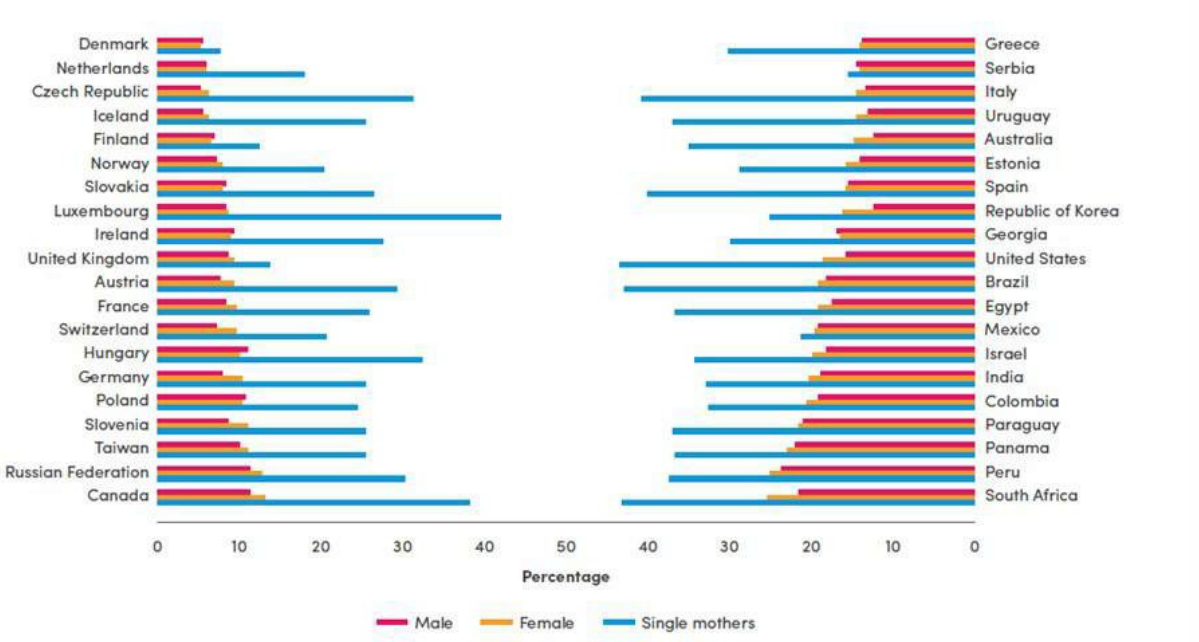


Sources: USAID 2017 and UNICEF 2017c
Note: Data refer to most recent available for 29 countries during reference period.

[12] The figures utilized to illustrate the following indicators have been extracted from UN Women 2018, Turning promises into action (Ibid).

2. Gender-specific indicators where sex-disaggregation is explicitly mentioned: The official name for these indicators includes the explicit mention “by sex”. Therefore, data produced will qualify as gender statistics. It is often the case that data can be further disaggregated beyond just sex. In the example below, the data has also been disaggregated by marital status to capture the situation of single mothers. These data, too, are gender statistics.

Figure 3: Percentage of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, 2007–2013

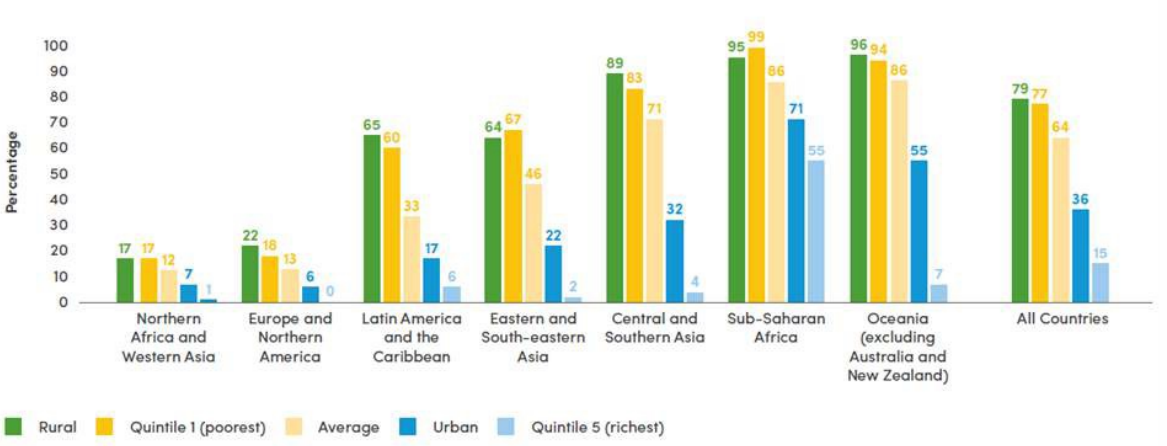


Source: Nieuwenhuis et al. Forthcoming.

Notes: Based on the most recent Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) datasets available for 42 countries. Data are from around 2013 (Wave IX) for 35 countries, around 2010 for 6 countries and 2007 in the case of 1 country (Dominican Republic). 'Single mother households' in this analysis refers to households with children below age 17 and no male adults (18+) residing in the household.

3. Gender-relevant indicators: These are indicators that do not necessarily mention sex or gender but have a gender angle. The indicator below fits this category because the use of solid fuels has a significant effect on indoor air quality. Because women tend to spend longer than men inside the household and, in many countries, are often tasked with cooking, the use of unclean fuels affects their respiratory health disproportionately.

Figure 4: Proportion of households with primary reliance on solid fuels, by region, location and wealth quintile, 2013-2016



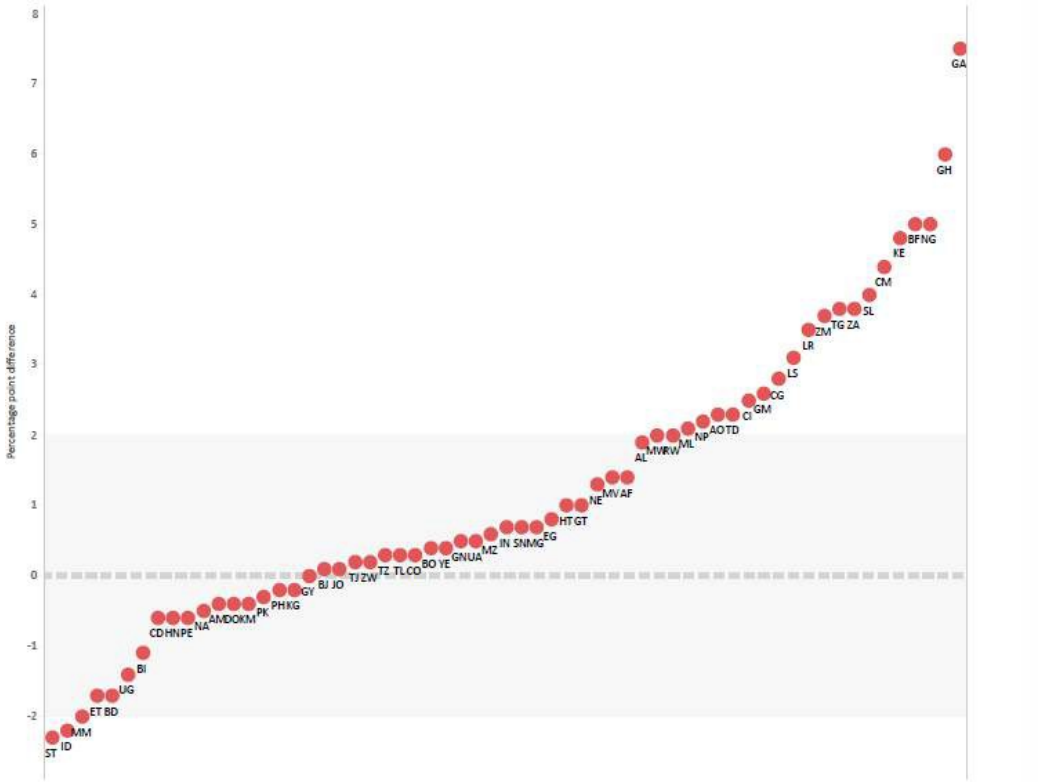
Source: UN Women calculations using data from WHO 2015b and UN Women calculations for countries where post-2013 microdata were available from DHS.

Note: Data refer to latest available in reference period for 92 countries. Regional aggregates are weighted based on the respective country population. Quintiles refers to wealth quintiles, where poorest are the bottom 20 per cent of households in the wealth distribution and richest are the top 20 per cent of households in the wealth distribution.

Besides these three types of gender indicators, it is important to keep in mind that, although many SDG indicators do not explicitly mention sex-disaggregation, many can indeed be sex disaggregated and have the potential to produce significant results from a gender perspective.

For instance, take the indicator on the "Proportion of population living in slums". Because these data have traditionally been collected at the household level, statistics are normally not sex disaggregated. However, reprocessing survey data to identify how many women vs. men live in slums reveals that women are more likely to live in slums in almost every country. This demonstrates that it is important to produce sex- disaggregated statistics wherever possible to obtain a more accurate picture of reality.

Figure 5: Gender gap among slum dwellers, by country, latest available year[13]



5. Why is gender data important?

Gender data is essential to make informed decisions. Therefore, the use of gender statistics is of utmost importance to achieve the SDGs for all. Going beyond national averages – including through

[13] Azcona, Duerto, Bhatt, Uteng, 2020. Harsh Realities: Marginalized women in cities of the developing world. Available from: https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/02/harsh-realities-marginalized-women-in-cities-of-the-developing-world

using gender data – is important to meet the promise of Leaving No One Behind[14].

Gender statistics are therefore necessary to:

- Design inclusive and effective policies that meet the needs of all
- Keep governments accountable for their commitments, including the achievement of the SDGs
- Advocate for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in an effective and truthful way
- Conduct analysis and academic research on the differentiated characteristics of the lives of women and men.

Let's look at these through a specific example: in the event that a natural disaster strikes in a country, national governments might want to look at statistics to prepare response interventions (*policymaking*). It would be important that gender statistics are used to assess the proportion of men and women affected by the disaster, as well as their coping capacity, including the vulnerability of their livelihoods, assets and housing, which is likely to be different between men and women. In addition, to ensure that rebuilding efforts meet the needs of both men and women, gender statistics would be important to determine participation rates in decision-making mechanisms. Similarly, civil society organizations looking to highlight the specific needs of population groups most affected by disaster might want to utilize gender statistics to shed light on the specific needs and coping capacities of women and men (*advocacy*). For researchers and scientists looking to come up with innovative solutions to preserve the health of the population in emergency situations, analyzing men and women's health data would be important as well (*analysis*). Finally, as national governments make commitments – such as the commitment to achieve SDGs and provide a sustainable future for all their men and women – their performance and degree of response to the needs of men and women after this event would require the use of gender statistics (*accountability*).

6. How do we fill gender data gaps?

Gender data gaps are widely prevalent, especially around new and emerging areas of statistics, such as those that capture the connections between gender and the environment, as well as around population groups that are hard to reach, such as refugees, migrants, homeless people and vulnerable groups that require data disaggregation at multiple levels (e.g. rural women of a certain ethnicity). Geographically, in Asia and the Pacific, gender data gaps are especially prevalent in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories, although for select indicators they are pervasive across the region.

Let's examine in more detail these key areas with large gender data gaps:

1. Emerging areas of statistics: Across the region, producing environment statistics that capture gender specificities is lately emerging as a key priority[15][16]. Environment statistics, which have

[14] See UNSD. 2016. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2016/secretary-general-sdg-report-2016--EN.pdf

[15] https://www.unescap.org/events/gender-statistics-pacific-establishing-roadmap-better-production-and-use- gender-statistics

[16] https://www.unescap.org/events/expert-meeting-statistics-gender-and-environment-asia-and-pacific

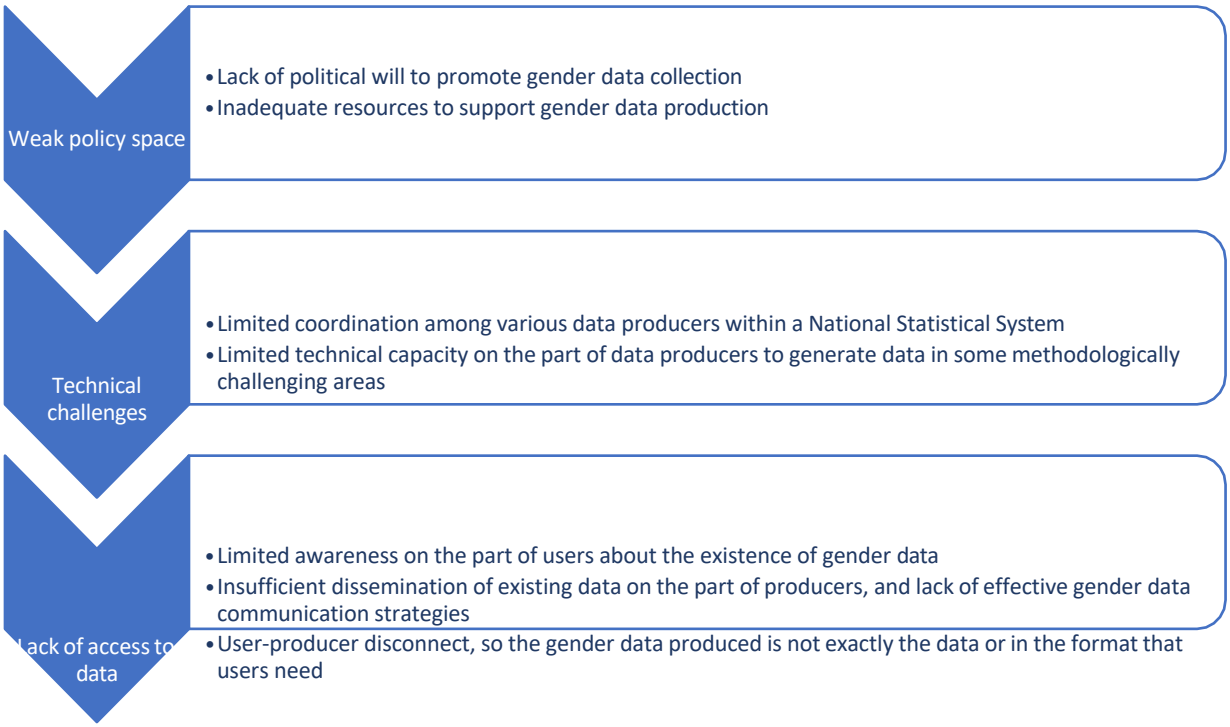
traditionally not been produced from a population perspective but rather a natural resource perspective (e.g. proportion of fish stocks within biologically safe limits, total CO2 emissions per country, etc.), are among the areas of statistics with the largest gender data gaps. From capturing men's and women's roles in natural resource management, environmental conservation and sustainable consumption, production and waste to measuring their vulnerability to climate change and disasters, statistics that capture the gender-environment nexus are largely missing in Asia and the Pacific. Similarly, and in occasions related to environmental issues, statistics on migration, displacement and conflict are also largely missing from a gender perspective.

2. Hard-to-reach population groups: In light of the *2030 Agenda*'s promise to Leave No One Behind, generating and using statistics for various population groups is now of high priority. However, statistics for some population groups, such as migrants, internally displaced people, refugees, homeless people and victims of trafficking are often hard to come by. The data gaps are even more likely to exist when these issues are looked at from a gender perspective. Yet, in the Asia- Pacific region, which sees the largest population movements as a result of climate-related displacement and hosts countries with the world's highest rates of human trafficking – most victims of which are women and girls – such data would be essential to assess whether the Leaving No One Behind promise is indeed being met. As these population groups are not often covered by many of the household surveys utilized to produce SDG data – and even when covered, no specific estimates are derived for these groups separately – the needs and characteristics of these people often remain invisible.
3. Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs): As of 2018, only 13 per cent of data were available for PICTs to monitor the gender-related indicators[17]. Due to the small size of their statistical institutions, costly data-collection processes and often limited financial resources, PICTs register the largest gender data gaps in the Asia-Pacific region. Of the three dimensions of sustainable development, gender statistics are particularly missing for the environmental dimension in PICTs. This is of particular concern as some of these countries are among the world's most affected by the effects of climate change. In addition, due to anonymity issues related to small population sizes, statistics for vulnerable groups are, for the most part, non-existent in this subregion.

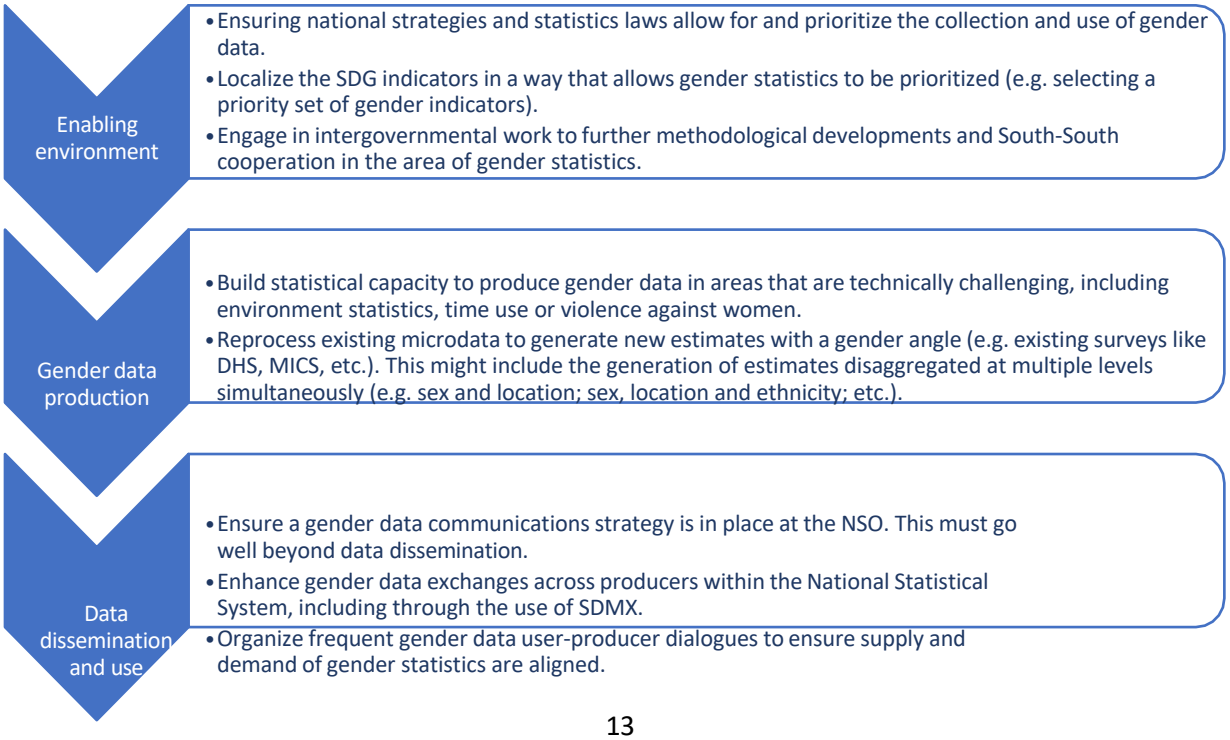
To fill gender data gaps, it is important to understand the most common reasons behind such gaps. These may include the following[18]:

[17] Regional aggregate excludes Australia and New Zealand. Source: UN Women. 2018. *Turning Promises into Action*. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda- for-sustainable-development-2018

[18] See UN Women. 2016. https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/flagship%2 0programmes/fpi-statistics-concept-note.pdf?la=en&vs=7



Some key solutions to overcome these challenges are listed below. UN Women's "Making Every Woman and Girl Count (Women Count) programme" works with national governments to support efforts to overcome these challenges in a number of ways, including some of these.



Overall, it is important to note that although substantial efforts are being allocated towards the generation of gender data and steady progress is being made in the Asia-Pacific region, substantial gaps remain. However, it is also relevant to note that generating gender data is not enough to affect change in the lives of women and girls. The data cycle must go beyond data creation and the focus of policymakers, statisticians and the public should start encompassing data use a lot more prominently. Communicating gender data, establishing feedback mechanisms between statisticians and decision-makers, and disseminating data openly remain some of the key barriers to filling gender data gaps and achieving sustainable development progress for women and girls.

This concludes Module 1. For exercises, presentations, a list of resources/links and example tests, please refer to the separate files attached to this module.

7. KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Sex and gender are not interchangeable. In statistics, it is important to be precise when using each of these words.*
- *Gender statistics are not just statistics about women.*
- *In the SDG framework, there are three types of gender indicators: those that refer to men or women; those that mention sex disaggregation explicitly; and those that cover areas of gender relevance, even when not explicitly mentioned.*
- *Gender indicators appear across the whole SDG framework; they go well beyond Goal 5.*
- *Gender statistics are essential for policy making, advocacy, accountability and research.*
- *There are large gaps in the availability of gender statistics in many countries, but they can be overcome by ensuring enabling environments are in place, sufficient quality gender data is produced, and available gender data is substantially used.*