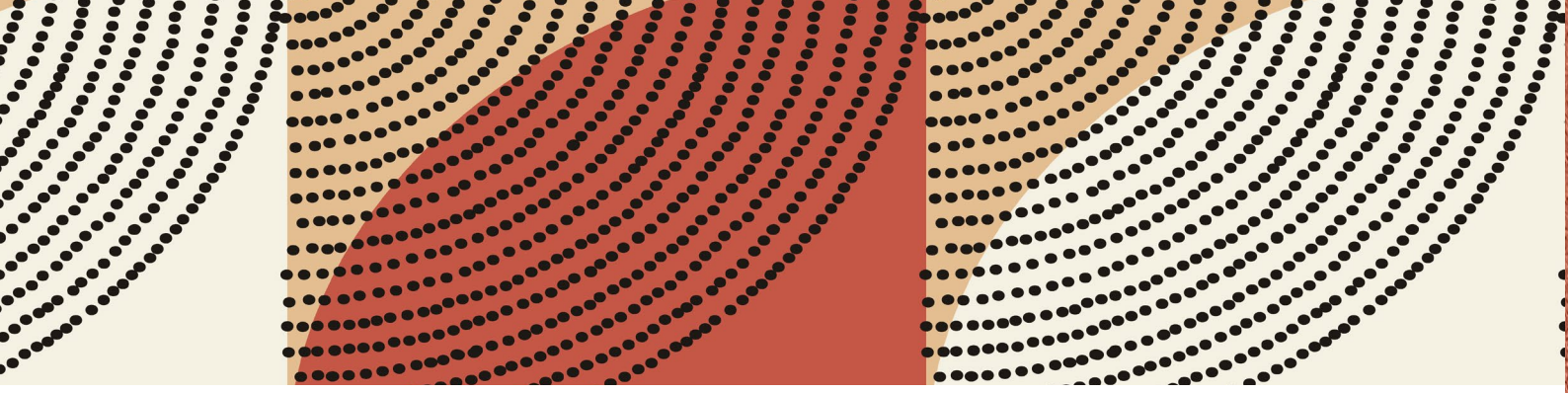


Legal Frameworks for Gender Data across Countries

Status and Opportunities





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About this report

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Foreword

Gender data gaps worldwide are hampering the effective monitoring of progress towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. The full potential of national statistical systems (NSS), with the national statistical office (NSO) as the core institution, to support the monitoring of national and international gender equality and women's empowerment commitments through the provision of gender data has not yet been reached.

As the understanding of the various factors that strengthen the uptake of gender data and statistics is still evolving, countries and their statistical systems are on a journey towards gender-responsive data ecosystems. This report aims to assist countries and development partners in this journey by analysing legal enablers of gender data.

The report analyses existing statistics laws and discusses the extent to which they support gender data capacity. It also supports countries seeking to integrate gender-sensitive provisions when modernising their national statistical legislation or when choosing to use other legal or policy solutions.

Chapter 1 provides the background and rationale for the research, including a discussion on the definition of gender data and their capacity as well as of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Chapter 2 presents the findings from an analysis of 108 statistics laws worldwide, taking stock of references to gender data or statistics and gender data capacity, encompassing the enabling environment, data production, and access. Chapter 3 highlights current models for modernising statistics laws and proposes solutions for gender mainstreaming according to the structure of the Generic Law on Official Statistics. Chapter 4 provides conclusions and areas for further research.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

GLOS	Generic Law for Official Statistics
NSDS	National strategy for the development of statistics
NSO	National statistical office
NSS	National statistical system
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UN FPOS	United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Executive summary

Despite numerous international and national commitments for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, progress worldwide is slow. While data availability has improved in recent years (Encarnacion, Emandi and Seck, 2022^[1]), persistent data gaps hamper effective monitoring, especially in low- and middle-income countries. The development community's efforts have historically focused on increasing data production. As such, they have so far overlooked more systemic approaches to gender data, especially with regard to legal frameworks governing not only statistical production but also institutional mandates, co-ordination and data dissemination.

A fit-for-purpose legal statistical framework for official statistics lays the foundation for a well co-ordinated NSS by facilitating co-operation between producers of official statistics and administrative data holders. In this way, it is an important mechanism for reducing gender data gaps. In addition, it should encourage adherence to internationally agreed-upon methodologies, incentivise user engagement and enable data partnerships with non-official data producers. These areas strengthen gender data capacity and impact of gender data.

However, emerging understandings of gender issues and their measurement have outpaced governments' ability to develop appropriate legislation, particularly in resource-constrained NSSs. This report supports countries and development partners in understanding the legal enablers of gender data. It assesses the current landscape of gender data provisions in statistics laws and presents other legal or formal solutions. The report uses the United Nations (UN) definition of gender statistics and the concept of "gender data capacity" introduced in 2024 in the *Gender Data Outlook* (PARIS21 and UN Women, 2024^[2]), which defines it along four dimensions: 1) an enabling environment; 2) production; 3) accessibility; and 4) use. Despite the importance of legal frameworks encompassing these four dimensions, this study focuses solely on the first three due to qualitative limitations in measuring data use.

Current statistical legislation fails to support gender data capacity

A review of 108 statistics laws worldwide reveals limited examples of comprehensive gender data support. Only 32% of the laws analysed mandate the disaggregation of statistics by sex or gender, which, while necessary, is insufficient to enable the production and accessibility of comprehensive gender data. Less than one third of statistics laws have provisions that support the enabling environment for gender data, 22% of laws include at least one provision that supports the production of gender data, and only 5% incorporate a provision related to accessibility. This shortfall stems from the lack of a systemic understanding of gender data and missing provisions that could create an enabling environment for their systematic production, access and use. Consequently, country examples are provided alongside the *Gender Data Outlook* dimensions. Countries may integrate a gender perspective when modernising their statistics law or use other laws, such as gender equality laws and other legal or policy instruments.

Gender mainstreaming can take place when statistics laws are modernised

Many statistics laws are currently unable to respond to the increasing demand for official statistics, but more so for gender statistics. The [Generic Law for Official Statistics \(GLOS\)](#) presents a comprehensive statistical legal framework which serves as a benchmark for countries modernising their statistics laws, offering a set of essential elements that a modern statistics law should incorporate. A dedicated section presents GLOS elements and proposes solutions for integrating gender data capacity elements.

Other formal solutions exist to strengthen the production and dissemination of quality gender data

Several other legal or formal solutions exist to support the production and dissemination of quality gender data, such as gender equality laws or decrees. Countries can also use policy documents with legal power. For low- and middle-income countries, in particular, national development plans or strategic plans for capacity development can serve as effective measures for integrating a gender perspective into statistics. The report provides country examples; highlights global commitments and standards, such as those articulated in the United Nations' *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* or Human Rights-based Approach to Data; and underscores the need for political will and stakeholder collaboration to achieve systemic change.

1 Introduction: Why do gender data need legal support?

Despite multiple global, regional and national commitments to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, progress is still too slow. According to 2024 projections, at the current pace, it will take 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws (Azcona et al., 2024^[3]). In 1975, the first United Nations Conference on Women recognised the lack of data and indicators as an important obstacle to understanding and addressing women's situation through public policies. Fifty years later, despite a considerable improvement in data availability, data gaps are still hindering uncovering the full picture of gender inequalities: the global average data availability for gender-specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators stood at 56% in 2024 (UN Women, 2024^[4]).

Global commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment have been calling for the adoption of all necessary measures, including legislative ones, to monitor progress and address situations where gender inequality occurs. SDG indicator 5.1.1 measures "whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex". Strategic area 3 of the 2017 Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data and its objective referring to "strengthen and expand data on all groups of population to ensure that no one is left behind", emphasises the importance of gender statistics, adopting as a key action to "Promote the systematic mainstreaming of gender equality in all phases of planning, production and usage of data and statistics". Annex C provides a list of key global commitments.

Defining gender data¹

In many countries, NSOs have assumed a pivotal role in measuring critical areas for gender equality and women's empowerment, following internationally agreed-upon standards and methodologies. In 2016, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs defined gender statistics as the sum of the following characteristics:

- data are collected and presented by sex as a primary and overall classification
- data reflect gender issues
- data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives
- data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender bias in the data (UN DESA, 2016^[5]).

To compile official statistics based on gender data, NSOs need to conduct national surveys and censuses and access administrative records typically produced by various public institutions, such as ministries and state agencies (e.g. education and health records).

Gender data needs

Applying the definition of gender statistics to NSOs' traditional data production poses multiple challenges. First, the interpretation of sex and gender as concepts still varies from one country to another. Many institutions tend to indistinctively use “sex” or “gender”, which may hide some of the challenges related to a gender-sensitive survey design and interpretation (Box 1).

Box 1. Disaggregation of data by sex or gender?

From one country to another, when referring to data tabulation or disaggregation in the common literature, the variables sex and gender are interpreted in a non-uniform way. The variable “sex” refers to biological differences between females and males. However, it disregards the “socially built power relations and gender norms that exist between men, women and people with other gender identities.” In this context, a person’s “gender” may change over time and differ from their sex at birth and from what is indicated on their legal documents, such as a birth certificate or driver’s license. Since many countries do not legally recognise gender identities other than female or male, when collecting data, they ask the question “What is your sex?” or “What is your gender?”, each of them asking seemingly for the same set of binary variables: female/male. However, some countries which recognise other gender identities, such as Canada, choose to include the following two questions: “What was your sex at birth (female/male)?” and “What is your gender (woman/man/non-binary)?”. The World Health Organization’s “Glossary of Terms and Tools” refers to sex assigned based on physical characteristics with three categories: female, male and intersex. The personal nature of these questions requires adaptation in the data collection process.

Sources: Cislaghi and Heise (2020^[6]); Gender Equity Unit (n.d.^[7]); www23.statcan.gc.ca.

The United Nations’ definition of gender statistics has implications for survey design, which should adequately capture gender-specific social norms and avoid perpetuating gender biases. However, that adaptation must be made to all existing data collection tools and at all statistical process stages, from design to dissemination. Training staff, revising existing data collection tools and ensuring gender sensitivity during the enumeration require sustainable resources. Many traditional sources of gender data still fail to comply with this definition. For example, in labour statistics, official surveys only consider the main activity, excluding secondary activities in which women may participate to a greater or lesser extent, and only paid work, excluding unpaid care and domestic work for which women account for the majority.² This results in biases in the measurement of these labour indicators, which affects the design and monitoring of gender policies and directly impacts women’s quality of life.

Administrative data systems (public services collecting data for various purposes, including their own administrative ones, such as civil registration and education and healthcare systems) are an important source of information on gender equality and women’s empowerment – both for national monitoring and reporting against international commitments and for national and subnational policy and planning.³ However, awareness of how gender statistics are affected by specific challenges for accessing these records is still low. These aspects require provisions on restructuring data flows or processes to ensure data can be appropriately disaggregated, among other things (UNICEF, 2020^[8]). In some cases, even when administrative data exist, they are not always accessible and, therefore, unavailable when compiling gender statistics. Reasons for this include legal and/or administrative impediments restricting access, sometimes legal interpretations, inter-governmental co-ordination problems, scarcity of technical and/or budgetary resources, and mistrust, all factors that affect the functioning of countries’ NSSs.

Moreover, in many countries, administrative data producers still cannot give NSOs access to their records, calling upon confidentiality provisions of their own laws even though NSOs also comply with confidentiality provisions (stricter in many cases) in their own statistics law. Statistics laws usually fail to address these situations, and, in many cases, are outdated from the perspective of being able to respond to the increasing demand for official statistics, including gender statistics. For that matter, it is relevant to understand further the fundamental elements that should be part of a statistical legal framework, as well as the areas that need modernised and create an enabling environment for gender data capacity development.

Past efforts to strengthen the monitoring of progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment have largely focused on increasing data production, which improved the overall gender data supply in traditional policy domains. The results of the 2022 United Nations Global Survey on Gender Statistics have confirmed the consistent (regular and recurring) production of gender data in key areas such as the labour force (79%), education (74%), and poverty and income (72%). However, with limited documentation of gender data use, the increase in data availability points toward a disconnect between data production and data use (Bonfert et al., 2022, 7 February^[9]). Focusing solely on production has neglected a systemic understanding of gender data and their capacity, which would reinforce the underlying challenges of data sharing, accessibility and user focus of gender data.

Modern statistical legislation that complies with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS) (UNSD, 2014^[10]) is an important aspect of strengthening the NSS' capabilities, of which NSOs are custodians. In practical terms, this implies ensuring the enabling conditions for official statistics, including gender statistics, to meet the information needs of government, the economy and citizens. In 2022, 86% of countries reported having at least one law or regulation mandating the production or dissemination of gender statistics (UNSD, 2024^[11]). Furthermore, 69% of responding countries reported having a dedicated budget for gender statistics in the national budget for statistics, marking a substantial rise from the 13% reported in 2012 (UNSD, 2024^[11]). However, the gender data system in low- and middle-income countries requires more substantial and sustainable resources to produce core gender statistics at regular intervals. With current stagnating trends of low and volatile funding for gender data, the availability of timely gender-specific evidence in these countries cannot be assured (PARIS21, 2024^[12]).

The picture is likewise worrying when considering emerging gender statistics. Only a few countries regularly implement time-use surveys, which constitute a highly relevant source of information for designing care and labour policies that mainly impact women.⁴ According to the 2022 United Nations Global Survey on Gender Statistics, only around 35% of countries regularly produce unpaid care and domestic work indicators, and around 20% of countries only do so occasionally. Another example is the estimation of satellite accounts to measure the contribution to gross domestic product of women's unpaid work, which is done regularly in only 10% of the countries and occasionally in an additional 5%. Moreover, in the context of the growth of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence trained on existing, often gender-biased sources of information (UN Women, 2024^[13]), producers of official statistics in all countries are facing the additional challenge of needing to respond in a timely and professional manner to misinformation. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the insufficiency of traditional gender data to inform urgent policy needs. Data from non-traditional sources, such as social media, news media, mobile device-generated geospatial and increasingly recognised citizen data (UN DESA, 2024^[14]) may provide complementary and rapid insights alongside, or without, traditional data sources (UN Women et al., 2021^[15]). Access to these data sources and their quality pose, however, a major problem for NSOs.

The concept of gender data capacity

International organisations' most recent efforts have focused on the use of gender data and aimed to clarify the arrays of enablers that strengthen gender data use. This includes understanding their systemic "capacity" and the "ecosystem" in which gender data exist.

Specifically, the *Gender Data Outlook* framework (PARIS21 and UN Women, 2024^[2]), produced by PARIS21 and UN Women under the Women Count Programme (UN Women, n.d.^[16]), was designed to analyse gender data capacity across countries.⁵ It presents four dimensions that cover the entire statistical process (value chain) for gender data: 1) the enabling environment that allows identifying needs and defining gender statistics; 2) data production; 3) access; and 4) use. Formally:

1. The enabling environment includes laws, regulations and action plans supporting gender data; NSO staffing and co-ordination of statistical activities; and financial resources.
2. Production/capacity refers to the ability to elaborate and process gender data (to monitor the progress of gender policies and programmes) by conducting population censuses and surveys, and producing and using administrative data.
3. Accessibility includes open gender data, user-friendly dissemination and NSO engagement with partners and stakeholders to ensure access.
4. Use refers to the different ways that different users use gender data to inform and take decisions (PARIS21 and UN Women, 2024^[17]).

This framework, accompanied by the definition of gender statistics, will guide further analysis of statistical legislation. It recognises that the existence of statistics laws supporting gender data is already a component of the “enabling environment” and that the provisions of statistics laws set up conditions for the enabling environment (and other dimensions).

Fundamental aspects of legal frameworks for official statistics

The FPOS are an essential element for the information system of a democratic society and contribute to national and global development priorities. These principles, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014, include: relevance, impartiality and equal access; professional standards and ethics; accountability and transparency; prevention of misuse; sources of official statistics; confidentiality; legislation; national co-ordination; use of international standards; and international co-operation.

In particular, the first principle refers to the relevance and impartiality of and equal access to official statistics, which implies that official statistics must comply with current and potential users’ needs (relevance); must be designed and produced in a neutral and unbiased manner, based on statistical considerations (impartiality); and must be available to all users under equal treatment and access conditions (equal access). Connections can be readily drawn between these characteristics and those that define gender statistics. They reinforce the fact that for gender statistics to meet users’ needs, it is not enough to disaggregate data by sex/gender⁶ and that there should not be biases along their statistical production chain. The remaining principles can be applied to reinforce the importance of correctly defining methods to produce gender statistics based on technical considerations (Principle 2) and following international standards (Principle 9) to comment and respond to erroneous interpretations and misuse of official gender statistics (Principle 4), complemented by literacy initiatives on gender statistics, among others.

In general, the practical implementation of the FPOS (UNSD, 2015^[18]) has taken diverse forms, such as codes of good statistical practice at regional and/or national levels, general and thematic guidelines and, lately, the Generic Law for Official Statistics developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE, 2016^[19]; 2019^[20]) adapted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2019^[21]) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA, 2024^[22]) for their respective regions. The GLOS presents a comprehensive statistical legal framework, serving as a benchmark for countries, with essential elements that a modern statistics law complying with the FPOS should incorporate.

Official statistics must consequently comply with a series of requirements that ensure an adequate level of quality, enhancing users' trust and promoting informed decision making. The “quality” concept is multidimensional and includes aspects such as relevance, accuracy, reliability, timeliness, punctuality, accessibility, clarity, coherence and comparability (UNSD, 2014_[10]). To fulfil these characteristics, official statistics are expected to comply with the United Nations National Quality Assurance Framework (United Nations, 2019_[23]), which comprehensively guides statistical activities across the NSS.

In addition to the FPOS, the Human Rights-Based Approach to Data, developed by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2018, introduces a set of principles. Some of these – such as transparency, privacy and accountability – coincide with the FPOS while others refer to self-identification, participation and disaggregation (UN OHCHR, 2018_[24]). The “participation” principle calls for the “participation of relevant population groups in the data collection exercise, including planning, data collection, dissemination, and analysis of data”. Both principles are key for identifying and understanding inequalities, such as gender inequalities, so incorporating them into a statistics law could help bring to the fore and reinforce the need for elaborating gender data and statistics as a core element of official statistics.

Linked to the principle of relevance is the concept of intersectionality, which plays an important role also in the context of gender data (Box 2).

Box 2. The importance of intersectionality for gender data

Intersectionality is a concept used to show that a person's experiences during the course of their life are diverse and not limited to one distinct category (e.g. being a woman or a man). Instead, barriers and discrimination are associated with multiple and intertwined characteristics including, for example, gender, age, disability or caste and that when barriers overlap, they magnify the disadvantage experienced. Intersectionality has been receiving increasing attention from the development community and countries in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly for cross-cutting gender equality, poverty reduction and the “leave no one behind” principle. Being able to disaggregate data simultaneously by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, etc. and to analyse their intersections can help reveal differential outcomes, alerting to different needs and circumstances, and multiple and overlapping barriers or discrimination. National statistical systems are expected to deliver very granular and timely gender statistics which, for many low- and middle-income countries, requires serious investments in statistical capacities.

Sources: UN Women (2020_[25]); Badiee and Buvinic (2024_[26]).

From a statistical perspective, integrating gender into data collection and dissemination can be seen as part of the overall process of improving the quality of data produced by the NSS, since the intrinsic disaggregation aspect of it strengthens the relevance and accuracy of statistics. From the point of view of women's rights organisations, integrating gender into statistical processes should help to capture the roots of gender inequalities and provide authoritative evidence for monitoring progress and transformative change.

Ensuring gender-responsiveness when revising statistics laws can support all official statistics. In addition, the value added when incorporating gender-sensitive provisions is that human rights-based approach to data (UN OHCHR, 2018_[24]) and the central objective of Agenda 2030 of leaving no one behind are better addressed as the provision of gender data constitutes an important tool to make visible and address persistent forms of discrimination,⁷ including by gender. While revision statistics laws may facilitate the provision of technical guidance and statistical capacity, they do not always incorporate this level of operational information. Secondary mechanisms such as decrees, guidelines or capacity development plans can be used as alternative or complementary approaches.

2 How do existing statistics laws support gender data?

The analysis of statistics laws worldwide⁸ (see Annex B for an overview of the availability of gender data provisions in statistical legislation in 108 countries) from all regions suggests that this legislation does not yet sufficiently support systemic gender data capacity. However, the depth of gender data mainstreaming in statistics laws varies from country to country.

Statistics laws do not incorporate all four principles of the United Nations gender statistics definition and, mostly, only mention the need to disaggregate statistics by sex or gender (32% of cases or 35 countries). This lack of explicit and adequate mandate, not to mention its execution, could be one of reasons why the progress on generating gender statistics still lags despite strong commitments at a global level. In fact, the latest United Nations *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems* (UNSD, 2023_[27]) recognises that "...of crucial importance to improving the availability of gender statistics is the specification of formal requirements for sex/gender-disaggregation and the incorporation of a gender perspective within the national statistical legislation that regulates the production and dissemination of official statistics" (Section 9.10.8 in UNSD (2023_[27])), and extends these requirements for official statistics from the whole NSS (not just the NSO), and even for organisations in the private sector.

Applying the lens of the *Gender Data Outlook* framework reveals that among the three gender data capacity dimensions covered in this report (enabling environment, production and accessibility)⁹, enabling environment is prioritised in the provisions of statistics laws. Of the laws, 31% (34 cases) have at least one provision that supports the enabling environment, 22% (24 cases) have at least one provision that supports the production, and only 5% (5 cases) incorporate a provision related to accessibility of gender data.

Annex C presents examples of statistics laws from Colombia, Israel and Liberia, where provisions exist for gender data across the enabling environment, production and accessibility. These examples demonstrate how gender data can be supported through explicit references to data disaggregation, programming and institutions (Israel and Liberia) or the introduction of inclusive approaches and principles (Colombia). While Annex C serves as an inspiration and support for countries intending to mainstream gender data in their statistical legislation, Chapter 3 recommendations should be likewise considered to mainstream gender when modernising statistics laws or when choosing to use other legal or policy solutions.

The sections that follow offer additional insights into supporting provisions under the topics of the enabling environment, production and accessibility.

References to the enabling environment for gender data

The enabling environment includes laws, regulations and action plans supporting gender data; NSO staffing and co-ordination of statistical activities; and financial resources. It covers methodological development or capacity building related to the various elements of the gender value chain that include: data governance; non-traditional data sources; the development of a gender statistics programme; mainstreaming a gender perspective; data collection, production and dissemination; user producer

dialogue/collaboration; reporting on gender-relevant SDG indicators; the use of a harmonised list of gender statistics indicators. From the sample of laws reviewed, only 34% of countries (31 cases) included a provision that could be related to supporting the enabling environment for gender data.

Among the most common legal provisions under this dimension are those referring to the obligation for NSOs to elaborate statistical strategic plans, most often referred to as a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) (PARIS21, n.d.^[28]). An NSDS is a five- or ten-year plan for statistical capacity development, elaborated among data producers and users, which is accompanied by a detailed and costed action plan, and which is often used as reference documents for governments and/or donors seeking to support statistical systems in low- and middle-income countries. However, mandating an NSO with an NSDS obligation alone does not yet mean that the NSDS will specifically address gender data capacity. Therefore, this obligation should be complemented with other provisions, such as, for example, establishing gender statistics as a priority statistical theme, addressing data sharing and co-ordination between the NSO and other institutions within or outside the NSS (e.g. including with the gender machinery) (UN Women, n.d.^[29]), and mandating regular training on statistical standards and methodologies.

Korea's Statistics Act (2007, last amended in 2024) regulates the production and distribution of statistics and refers to the classification by gender when the statistics are related to natural persons. The act establishes that the heads of statistics service agencies shall designate and manage a staff member in charge of statistics related to the production and distribution of gender statistics. To foster co-ordination, a National Statistics Committee has been created under the Minister of Strategy and Finance (Article 5), and to which the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family is one of its members.

Costa Rica's Statistical Law No. 9694 (2019) indicated in Article 6 that the National Statistical Development Strategy is a planning instrument that provides the guiding and strategic framework for the NSS for ten years. Since Statistical Law No. 9694 did not reference gender data, the incentive for gender mainstreaming in statistics had to come from the policy side. The National Statistical Development Strategy 2023-2032 states that the gender perspective has been incorporated into the production of statistics, exhibiting progress into the NSO's different statistical operations (National Institute of Statistics and Census) and other statistics-producing institutions. In terms of co-ordination, it also states that in 2003, the National Institute of Statistics and Census and the National Institute of Women created the Gender Statistical Indicator System.

Financial resources are very rarely present in statistics laws other than in the form of very general statements, in part because they are most often part of a separate annual government budget and because when statistics laws are updated, the availability of resources is usually included in a separate financial document. Of the 108 laws revised, only the 2024 Statistics Act of Korea included more detailed references to the financing of official statistics. In this case, the Korean Statistics Act mandates the preparation of a master plan every five years including, among others, the "scale of financial resources required and methods for financing" and stipulates that "the Commissioner of the Statistics Korea may partially subsidize to cover the expenses incurred in the operation and business of statistics service agencies or the agencies, etc. that conduct business concerning the education, development, promotion, diagnosis of quality, or public relations of statistics within the budget every year" (Korea Legislation Research Institute, 2024^[30]).

References to gender data production

This dimension covers conditions favouring the collection of data to elaborate gender statistics. This includes, for instance, implementing a housing and population census – which includes variables such as sex/gender, age, ethnicity and civil status, among many others allowing a demographic and social analysis – or surveys of different matters (ideally focused on subjects particularly relevant for gender analysis, such as time-use surveys, violence against women, etc.). Accessing and being able to use other sources of

data, such as administrative data or other secondary sources of data, for statistical purposes is also an important enabling factor of this dimension. The presence of references to intersectionality is also analysed under this point. The analysis revealed that only 22% of countries (24 cases) included a provision supporting gender data production.

Statistics laws traditionally mandate the NSO to conduct censuses (usually planned every ten years) and surveys but less often to access administrative data for statistical purposes. In the sample of statistics laws, in around one third of countries the legal provision related to surveys directly or indirectly allows elaborating gender statistics. In some countries, the statistics laws include a schedule listing the statistical information that may be collected, compiled, analysed, abstracted and published, where one of the items is “gender”. This is the case, for example, of **Gambia, Kenya, Samoa, Somalia**, the **United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu** (which also includes gender-based violence) and **Zambia**.

Other countries are more explicit when referring to foundational surveys for gender statistics or ensuring that concepts, classifications and/or methodologies include gender-responsive considerations. For example, **Sierra Leone’s Statistics Act (2002)** establishes the functions and responsibilities of Statistics Sierra Leone, indicating that it shall “...review and approve all definitions and classification schemes employed in statistical work with particular reference to issues of labour statistics, gender, disability, regional and similar socio-economic issues in accordance with appropriate national and international standards and classifications ...” (Article 10-2b). **Norway’s Statistics Act (2021)** indicates that Statistics Norway is the central body for preparing and disseminating official statistics and establishes that a National Program will define and delimit official statistics. The National Programme 2024-2027 mentions that social statistics such as those associated with gender inequality, social security and elections are disaggregated by gender.

Intersectionality is hardly visible in the statistics laws analysed. If the aspect of disaggregation is mentioned in the statistical legislation, it is often limited to “sex and other relevant variables”. There are, however, exceptions, including **Somalia’s National Statistics Law No. 24 from 2020**, which is more specific and stipulates that official statistics should be “sensitive to distribution of gender, education, occupation, disability, geography and other relevant analytical features” (Somalia National Bureau of Statistics, 2020_[31]).

References to gender data accessibility

This dimension covers gender data accessibility aspects, such as open access for gender data, dissemination, and NSO engagement with partners and stakeholders. From the sample of laws reviewed, only 5% of countries (5 cases) included a provision that could directly or indirectly be related to dissemination or engagement with users of statistics. One of the reasons for this may be that some of these concepts, like, for example, open data, are relatively new so not included in statistics laws that might be up to 50 years old.

In terms of dissemination, the most common provisions supporting gender data refer to publishing data and statistics disaggregated by sex/gender. For example, **Turkey’s Statistics Law (2005)** establishes a Publication and Dissemination Board within the Turkish Institute of Statistics “to set principles, standards and policies relating to the publication and dissemination of statistics produced under the Programme ...” (Article 42). In turn, the Official Statistical Programme, which contains all official statistics that must be produced (Article 3), is prepared with the information produced by official statistics working groups that are organised by area. One of these areas is Social Structure and Gender Statistics. **Finland’s Statistics Act 280 (2004)**, concerning the release of confidential data, specifies that the NSO may release such data for use in scientific research or statistical surveys on social conditions, including information on a person’s age, gender, education, occupation and socio-economic group, provided that the recipient of the data is authorised to process such data under the personal data act.

Table 1 summarises the availability of gender data supporting provisions by income group.

Table 1. Share of countries with statistics law provisions supporting gender data capacity

Income group	Statistics law refers to sex/gender disaggregation	Support to enabling environment for gender data	Support to gender data production	Support to gender data accessibility
High income	11%	10%	6%	2%
Upper middle income	7%	7%	7%	2%
Lower middle income	6%	6%	5%	0%
Low income	7%	7%	6%	1%

Note: The income groups refer to the 2025 World Bank classification.

These results confirm that explicit references to sex/gender-disaggregation of data and support for creating an enabling environment for gender data, although still rare, remain the most popular measures used in statistical legislation.

3 Recommendations for integrating a gender perspective into statistical legal frameworks

This chapter provides recommendations and proposals for integrating a gender perspective into statistical legal frameworks. It first discusses doing so when revising the statistics laws following the Generic Law for Official Statistics model, which can be useful to identify what is already included in the benchmark. It then discusses using other formal solutions, such as bylaws, national development plans or gender equality laws, with country cases of application (and in selected cases presenting examples of impact).

When modernising statistical legislation

According to the GLOS, modern statistical legislation must comply with the United Nations FPOS, obliging all NSS members to respond promptly and accurately to the demands of the various users of official statistics. With regard to the formal structure of the legislation, countries may choose different strategies and approaches when drafting a bill. Nonetheless, some common elements may be expected and are of importance to gender data capacity. In accordance with the United Nations *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems* (UNSD, 2023^[27]) and with the GLOS, statistical legislation should consider the following points: the objective and scope of the law; the main principles and definitions of official statistics; the organisation of the NSS; the statistical advisory council and other advisory bodies; co-ordination of the NSS and statistical programmes; data collection; statistical confidentiality; the quality of official statistics; dissemination and communication; statistical services; international co-operation; infringements; and links to other legislation. Finally, for the proper functioning of the NSS, the availability of resources (administrative, qualified personnel and budgetary) is foundational, although in general, it is only implicitly inferred from the provisions of the statistics law (e.g. the GLOS) or included as a transitory provision of the law. This section presents suggestions on how to include gender provisions in each point.

The GLOS and its structure are used as a reference for better explaining these proposals, so changes are proposed to some of its articles. It should be noted, though, that the GLOS is not explicit in requesting official statistics to be disaggregated by sex/gender or in introducing a gender-responsive perspective across its provisions.

With the objective to mainstream gender in the statistical legislation, countries could consider the following proposals when updating their statistical legislation.

Adding a definition of gender statistics following internationally agreed-upon concepts

Main principles and definitions of official statistics. It is relevant to explicitly include principles (coherent with the UN FPOS) of the statistics law, as they set the frame for the entire NSS and allow the identification of official statistics as those statistics that comply with them and with the entire statistics law. The GLOS incorporates definitions for the following concepts: use for statistical purposes, statistical

surveys, administrative data, statistical units, individual data, identifiers, dissemination, release, production, development, metadata and the co-ordination of statistical activities. It does not refer to gender statistics in any of its articles. The first proposal is thus to add a formal definition of gender statistics (based on UN guidelines) either in the statistical law or in any norm aiming to foster gender data and statistics. The simple inclusion of this definition in the statistics law can have a significant impact not only in explicitly making visible the concept of gender statistics but also by becoming an official term to which other laws can be referred (Box 3).

Box 3. Article 4.1 (GLOS) – Definitions of main concepts

(I) Gender statistics are defined as statistics that adequately reflect the differences and (in)equalities in the situation of women and men, girls and boys.* They cover a broad diversity of topics and issues, reflecting the ever-changing roles of women and men in society and public life, in the economy, and in families and households. Gender statistics are defined by the sum of the following characteristics:

- data are collected and presented by sex as a primary and overall classification
- data reflect gender issues
- data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives
- data collection methods consider stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender biases.

* Efforts are underway regarding the interpretation of gender beyond a binary understanding. The United Nations Statistical Commission addressed this in 2024 and concluded that no specific guidance can yet be provided due to evolving practices.
Source: UN DESA (2016^[6]).

Adding the principle of inclusion

An additional concept that could be added refers to the principle of intersectionality, considered key for gender statistics analysis and, therefore, for being effective in policies addressing all forms of gender discrimination. Another principle, taken from **Colombia's** recently enacted statistics law, is the principle of inclusion, as it reinforces the importance of considering different characteristics of some population groups based on different approaches and/or situations. Following the GLOS structure, it can be added in the format presented in Box 4.

Box 4. Article 3 (GLOS) – Main principles of official statistics, where gender-sensitive principles could be added

(h) Principle of intersectionality. An intersectional approach to data examines the multi-dimensionality of identity and its impacts. The principle of intersectionality in gender statistics means that indicators should be disaggregated according to relevant variables to highlight the multifactorial and entangled nature of gender inequalities, so that it is possible to identify the most vulnerable life situations of some population groups with respect to others.

(i) Principle of inclusion. All statistical production activities will be carried out with respect for the country's diversity, for the different characteristics of some population groups and seeking to make visible the living conditions of those whose rights are violated due to their age, ethnicity, cultural identity, nationality, gender, sex, political or ideological positions, religious beliefs, disability, economic or labour situation, or others.

Adding gender data production and dissemination to the national statistical office's functions

The section "organisation of the NSS" refers to the mechanism by which members of the NSS are organised (e.g. centralised vs. decentralised), co-ordinated, and plan their activities. This includes clearly specifying the role of the NSO, which tends to be the principal producer of official statistics, and among its functions it oversees the NSS co-ordination, provides technical guidelines regarding the production and dissemination process of official statistics, and in general promotes statistical capacity-building initiatives. The GLOS describes the NSO as a professional independent body and the main producer of official statistics "responsible for co-ordinating all activities for the development, production and dissemination of official statistics within the NSS". Most countries, however, add a specific article listing a set of functions for the NSO, among which it is possible to introduce a gender perspective by adding the elaboration and dissemination of gender statistics or other gender issues. Ideally, this could also encompass the entire NSS. Box 5 presents the example of Liberia's Statistical Act (2004).

Box 5. Additions* to consider to Liberia Statistical Act (2004) goals, objectives and functions of the national statistical system, including gender provisions

Section 50A.5. Goals. The goals of the [Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services] LISGIS shall be to:

1. Establish, develop and maintain a holistic National Statistical and Spatial Data System (NSSDS) and an integrated National Statistical and Spatial Database (NSSD).
2. Co-ordinate, monitor and supervise the NSSDS and NSSD to allow for the provision of holistic *gender and geographic sensitive analysis* for timely, relevant and acceptable standards of information to institutions of the government, the business, and the wider national and international communities.

Section 50A.6. Objectives: The objectives of LISGIS shall be to:

2. formulate and implement national strategies, programmes and policies for the development and management of a National Statistical and Geo-information System and an *integrated gender- and environment-sensitive* NSSD in Liberia [*which must be disaggregated by sex/gender and other relevant variables to allow for an intersectional analysis when referring to individuals*].

Section 50A.8. Functions and responsibilities: The LISGIS shall undertake the following functions and responsibilities:

18. Promote and encourage the use of common and new concepts, methodologies, definitions, procedures, nomenclatures and standards, including *geographic considerations and gender and development*, in the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information, to ensure integration of the National Statistical System as well as an integrated National Statistical Database.

[*Ensure gender mainstreaming across all activities*].

Section 50A.11. Powers and functions: Subject to the provisions of this act the board shall:

2. Monitor the development and functioning of the National Statistical and Geo-information System and the National Statistical Database, *taking into account gender, geographic and environmental considerations*, using basic human development indicators. [*Ensure gender parity of the council's members as well as designation of gender focal points in the national statistical system*].

Section 50A.14. Powers and functions of the Director-General: The powers and functions of the Director-General shall be to:

9. Ensure that statistics and geo-information produced *reflect a gender and geographic perspective*.

* From here on out, whenever there is a proposal to add words to a specific clause, the new words are presented in blue italics inside squared brackets.

In general, the older the statistics law, the less likely it is to incorporate a gender data provision: about 90% of countries including at least one of the gender conditions have statistics laws enacted after 2000. Other statistical legislations, even if updated recently, do not incorporate such provisions, although they could be easily modified with small changes to the wording. Box 6 provides an example using Costa Rica's relatively recent statistics law (2019).

Box 6. Additions* to consider to Costa Rica’s recently updated statistics law (Law 9694 of 2019) regarding the NSS and NSO (INEC) functions

Article 12: The national statistical system (NSS) institutions should periodically update the base year of the different indexes published, as well as *review and update the methodologies used in the production of official statistics [including gender statistics]*, to adapt them to new demands and technical recommendations, ensuring the comparability of historical series.

Article 34: INEC shall prepare and disseminate the following statistics:

- a. Population statistics, such as population estimates and projections and vital statistics, among others *[ensuring disaggregation by sex/gender and age of the population indicators]*. The entities responsible for registering vital events and others necessary for population estimations must include in their records the information required by INEC for the preparation of these statistics.
- b. Those in the economic area, such as statistics on trade and services, agriculture and livestock, mining, industry and manufacturing, construction and foreign trade, transportation, and taxation, among others *[disaggregating by sex/gender the variables that refer to individuals]*.
- c. Consumer price indexes, production indexes, cost indexes, among others.
- d. Those related to the social area, such as statistics on employment and unemployment, household budgets, access to basic services, poverty, household income [statistics on time use], population welfare, ethnicity, disability, and culture, among others *[disaggregating by sex/gender the variables that refer to individuals]*.

Integrating gender into provisions of the statistics council

The section on the **statistical advisory council and other advisory bodies** includes relevant instances to obtain feedback from users of official statistics. It should thus incorporate different profiles of statistics users. The council is defined – by the GLOS – as the main advisory body of the government and the NSO on issues of strategic importance to official statistics, composed of representatives of different user categories, and where the public sector representatives must not form the majority. In case members include political authorities such as ministers or its delegates, it should be clear that their role as members is as users and is independent of their political roles. Similarly, it is worth noting that adding women into the composition of such councils is a positive step toward representation, but not sufficient to ensure gender mainstreaming in the statistical activity.

It is relevant to add specific gender data related to the functions of the council, for instance as is shown in Box 7.

Box 7. Article 8.4 (GLOS) – Tasks of the statistical council

- a. Make proposals for the strategic development of official statistics and ensure that the statistical programmes reflect the priority information needs of the society *[including, but not limited to, gender data and statistics]*.
- b. Evaluate the implementation of the statistical programmes and follow up on the implementation of strategic development activities.
- c. Assess and advise on issues of compliance with principles of official statistics.
- d. Adopt the rules and procedures of the statistical council to regulate its tasks, organisation, working methods and decision making *[including gender parity of the council's members as well as designation of gender focal points in the national statistical system]*.

Adding provisions on dedicated entities/programmes to support gender data

An alternative measure is to stipulate the creation of dedicated entities (within the NSO or NSS) mandated with the collection and dissemination of well-defined gender data, including, for instance, the elaboration, analysis, use and dissemination of gender statistics, such as those relevant to visualise women's contribution to the country's economic and social development. Law 1413 of 2010 of Colombia provides an example. It introduces such a measure and creates a Intersectoral Gender Commission with the objective to measure the contribution of women's unpaid work to the National Accounts System. This law is complemented by a secondary norm (Decree 2490 of 2013) describing the functions in detail.

Box 8. Colombia's Law 1413 (2010) on Multisectoral Commission to include unpaid household work in the national accounts

Article 1. Purpose and scope of the law. The purpose of this law is to include the care economy made up of unpaid household work in the national accounts, to measure women's contribution to the economic and social development of the country, and as a fundamental tool for the definition and implementation of public policies.

Article 4. Scope of application of the law. The National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) is responsible for co-ordinating compliance with the provisions of this law. For this it shall establish the mechanisms and take the necessary steps to plan, design, apply and update a time-use survey, an indispensable instrument to obtain the information on unpaid household work.

The national government, headed by DANE, will integrate a Multisectoral Commission that will decide how to include the information on unpaid household work in the national accounts. This will be done through the creation of a Satellite Account assigned to the corresponding sector or as deemed necessary. The Multisectoral Commission shall be binding and shall give rise to the administrative and accounting procedures necessary for the inclusion of unpaid household work in the national accounts.

Article 7. Use of information. The Ministry of Finance, the National Planning Department, the Bank of the Republic, the National Accounting Office, the Comptroller General's Office of the Republic and the other governmental entities that participate in the preparation, follow-up and control of the budget and the study of the national economy should include unpaid housework in their analyses as a contribution to the country's economic development.

Integrating provisions on gender data co-ordination within the national statistical system

The provisions under this section oblige producers of official statistics to use uniform, internationally agreed-upon concepts,¹⁰ definitions, classifications and methods. These common practices should be promoted through technical assistance and co-ordination of the NSS. For the co-ordination role, NSOs can use multi-year and annual statistics programmes, key instruments for setting strategies regarding statistical development and for implementing and co-ordinating statistical activities at the NSS level. In some cases, it is advisable to form a committee on a particular topic (e.g. a gender statistics committee), which includes producers of official statistics and if needed data providers, where technical assistance, data sharing (including administrative data) and co-ordination can be strengthened.

In general, the GLOS does not mention specific indicators or statistics that a programme should incorporate; it refers only to general content. As part of that content, annual programmes should include all surveys to be carried out by producers of official statistics, all statistics and indicators to be released, the data sources used and/or methods of data collection for each survey, frequencies of the releases, the international standards and guidelines used, etc. Equally important is that when the programme is approved by the corresponding governmental entity, it should be granted adequate resources (human, financial and technical) for its implementation. Both multi-year and annual programmes offer space for the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions. For instance, based on the GLOS, the annual programme can be defined as presented in Box 9.

Box 9. Article 13.1 (GLOS) – Annual statistical programme

An annual statistical programme of the national statistical system shall be established each year as an operational translation of the multi-year statistical programme [PARIS21 refers to it as a national strategy of statistical development, NSSD] to update the list of producers of official statistics and to provide the legal basis for:

- e) All official statistics to be released *[which must be disaggregated by sex/gender and other relevant variables to allow for an intersectional analysis when they refer to individuals]*.
- f) All statistical surveys to be carried out by the producers of official statistics.
- g) All transmissions of administrative data or data from other existing sources to producers of official statistics.
- h) The main development activities of official statistics *[which should include gender mainstreaming across all the phases of the activities]*.
- i) Statistical registers to be maintained and developed *[disaggregating by sex/gender and other relevant variables to allow for an intersectional analysis when they refer to individuals]*.

Specific provisions on gender data production

According to the GLOS, producers of official statistics are entitled to select data sources based on technical and professional considerations, which includes considering the quality of the data collected and data sources as well as their costs and response burden. A general principle is that the state should not require informants provide data that have already been collected by a public entity, which in turn justifies unrestricted access to administrative data by NSS members (especially the NSO) when it is for statistical purposes. In turn, the NSO exerts a leading role in providing technical assistance to administrative data holders and encouraging them to follow standard statistical guidelines when collecting, treating and/or

modifying their data. In those functions defined in the GLOS, gender-sensitive provision could be added to accelerate and improve the elaboration of gender data and statistics.

Box 10. Article 15 (GLOS) – Mandate for gender data collection

15.1 Producers of official statistics shall be entitled to select data sources based on professional considerations and collect the necessary data to compile official statistics directly from respondents.

15.2 Data collection shall be designed with due consideration of the quality of statistics, the costs of data provision and the response burden. *[Whenever referring to individuals, data collection should be disaggregated by sex/gender, among other relevant variables, to comply with the principle of intersectionality, and based on methodologies that consider the gender perspective, so as to avoid gender biases].*

15.3 *[Ethics and safety for respondents (and interviewers/data producers) should be taken into consideration in the compilation and collection of official statistics].*

Article 17 (GLOS) – Access to administrative data

17.1 All national and local authorities are obliged to provide producers of official statistics, free of charge, with data in their possession at the level of detail necessary to produce official statistics and with the metadata that enable assessing the quality of the data. *[Whenever these data refer to individuals, they must be collected considering gender-sensitive methodologies and shared disaggregated by sex/gender].* Special confidentiality or secrecy provisions in other legislation cannot be invoked unless the legislation explicitly excludes the use of data for statistical purposes.

Specific provisions on the dissemination and communication of gender data

The GLOS provisions differentiate statistical releases (the first time the statistics are publicly known) from dissemination (activities for making official statistics accessible to users), especially advocating for the protection of statistical confidentiality (always) and ensuring equal and simultaneous access when releasing statistics (principle of impartiality, Article 29.1 of the GLOS). Also, a dissemination policy should establish transparent procedures and a unified terminology when disseminating official statistics across the NSS.

Considering the gaps regarding not only the elaboration and dissemination of gender data and statistics but also the understanding of the gender statistics concept among the population in general, adding a gender perspective to these provisions offers an opportunity to create an enabling environment for gender data use for policy making. Box 11 provides a proposition in this sense.

Box 11. Article 29 (GLOS) – Statistical releases including gender data

29.1 Official statistics shall be disseminated in a timely and punctual manner in full compliance with ... the present law, particularly in respect of protecting statistical confidentiality and ensuring equal and simultaneous access as required under the principle of impartiality.

29.3 Releases of official statistics shall be accompanied by metadata and explanatory comments, and access shall be granted to all users free of charge. *[The releases and their respective metadata should disaggregate by sex/gender those statistics variables referring to individuals, and if that is not possible,*

the metadata should clearly explain why]. Producers of official statistics may set the price of printed publications and other material, as regulated in [name of the legal act].

29.4 Official statistics shall be clearly distinguished from any other statistics when released *[and shall use gender-inclusive and gender-sensitive language]*.

Article 30 (GLOS) – Dissemination policy

30.1 The national statistical office shall establish:

(a) A co-ordinated dissemination policy with transparent procedures to be applied across the national statistical system *[which should incorporate a gender perspective in all elements of such a dissemination policy. This implies using gender-inclusive language; highlighting gender indicators and statistics as different from only disaggregating variables by sex/gender; combining sex/gender and other variables disaggregation to present an intersectoral approach for gender statistics; among other characteristics]*.

(b) A unified terminology for the dissemination of all official statistics *[that complies with (a), applicable for all NSS members]*.

Relationship with other legislations with importance to gender data

The “Relationship to other legislation” is an important element of the GLOS, as it provides the opportunity to reinforce if any other law referring to official statistics should comply with the present statistics law. It also clarifies that there should not be any conflict between the statistics law and other selected laws, such as the transparency law or the personal data protection act. For countries with a gender equality law that assigns the function of elaborating and disseminating gender official statistics to a ministry in charge of gender equality (if it exists), it should also be explicit in defining the coherence between both laws. A reference to laws on non-discrimination and other laws supporting a human rights-based approach to data (UN OHCHR, 2018^[24]) could also be made here.

Box 12. Article 37 (GLOS) – Articles on statistics in other legislation

37.1 Any other legal act referring to official statistics shall be adapted to comply with the present law. Any party preparing legislation that may affect statistical data or activities shall consult the national statistical office for its opinion. In case of conflicting legislations, the provisions of the present law or another act based on or mentioned in the present law shall apply. Statistics produced by authorities according to their own regulatory frameworks that do not comply with the provisions of the present law are not considered official statistics.

37.2 The development, production and dissemination of data shall respect the provisions of [names of the legal act, such as Act on the Openness of Government Activities, Archives Act, etc.] only if these are not in conflict with the present law.

37.3 The relationship between the present law and the personal data act is as follows [.....]

37.4 *[The relationship between the present law and the gender act is as follows: articles [...list relevant articles referring to official statistics of the gender law that cover statistical aspects not covered by the statistics law.....] referring to official statistics addressed by the gender law, will be included de facto in the present law, provided they are not in conflict with the present law]*.

Other formal solutions amending or complementing existing legal frameworks for statistics

The modernisation of statistics laws has not yet been fully implemented to provide the enabling conditions to respond to the increasing demand for gender statistics. This obsolescence is evident in the insufficient incorporation of all the principles of the FPOS in statistics laws. These principles are important from a gender data perspective, such as, for example, the professional independence of producers of official statistics, the unrestricted access to administrative data for statistical purposes, the incorporation of provisions that allow for granularity of statistics and intersectoral approaches – particularly for gender statistics.

Consequently, apart from the opportune moment of revising a statistics law, it is worth also considering other strategies and approaches that can be equally effective and impactful. While there is no universal solution to addressing gender statistics gaps, a multipronged approach is equally important. Secondary regulations, guides and codes of good practice, and memoranda of understanding can be equally considered to accelerate and strengthen the production and dissemination of quality¹¹ gender data and statistics. Integrating gender data into the strategic plans for statistics or when issuing technical guidelines, handbooks and protocols may complement laws and secondary regulations. When accompanied by technical assistance from the NSOs (or international agencies) to other NSS members, it can be highly effective in mainstreaming the gender perspective in official statistics. Some of these guidelines may even adopt a legal status after implementation.

Decrees

Many countries may find introducing secondary regulation (e.g. a decree) easier than modernising the existing statistics law. This is due not only to the complexity and the time required by the legislative process but also to the nature of the contents to be incorporated. Therefore, countries may also opt for the statistics law to focus primarily on generic provisions, leaving its implementation to a related secondary regulation.

Faced with the difficulty of updating a statistics law, countries have sometimes enacted miscellaneous regulations to address the issue directly. For instance, **Chile's** Presidential Decree 305 of 2009 (BCN, n.d._[32]) and the Democratic Republic of **São Tomé and Príncipe's** Ministerial Decree 7 of 2000 (INE, 2018_[33]) mandated the incorporation of the “sex” or “gender” variable in all statistical production and in the collection of administrative data regarding persons, mandating all ministries and public agencies belonging to the state administration. To this end, the NSO became responsible for monitoring their compliance. Likewise, **Italy's** 2016 NSO Modernization Program (ISTAT, 2016_[34]) states that basic information records arising from surveys, administrative data or other sources should have demographic information such as gender and date of birth, among others.

Gender equality laws

Another alternative is introducing a gender data focus in the legal framework for gender equality, as it usually also encompasses the need to monitor progress. One example of such a law is the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) enacted by the **Philippines** in 2009 (Philippine Commission on Women, 2009_[35]). The MCW is a comprehensive women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination through the recognition, protection, fulfilment and promotion of the rights of Filipino women, especially those belonging to the marginalised sectors of society. It conveys a framework of rights for women based directly on international law. Another example worth mentioning here is **Colombia**, which in 2010 became the first country to formally acknowledge the economic contribution of unpaid care work with the passage of a law (Law 1413 of 2010 on the Inclusion of the Care Economy in the System of National Accounts) mandating time-use surveys to account for the care economy and women's invisible contribution to national accounts. The law made DANE responsible for establishing the mechanisms and taking the necessary steps to plan,

design, apply and update a Time-Use Survey, which is considered an indispensable instrument for obtaining information on unpaid household work (Congress of Colombia, 2010^[36]). **Spain's** Organic Law 3/2007 for the Effective Equality of Women establishes in great detail (Article 20) "...In order to guarantee the effective integration of the gender perspective into their ordinary activities, the public authorities, in the elaboration of their studies and statistics, shall: (a) systematically include the sex variable in the statistics, surveys and data collection they carry out; (b) establish and include in statistical operations new indicators that make possible a better understanding of the differences in the values, roles, situations, conditions, aspirations and needs of women and men, their manifestation and interaction in the reality to be analysed; (c) design and introduce the necessary indicators and mechanisms that will make it possible to know the incidence of other variables whose concurrence generates situations of multiple discrimination in the different areas of intervention;(f) review and, if necessary, adapt existing statistical definitions in order to contribute to the recognition and valuation of women's work and avoid negative stereotyping of certain groups of women." Another example is provided by **Iceland's** Gender Equality Law (2000), which establishes that "In the production of official statistics on individuals and interview and opinion surveys, information shall be collected, compiled, analysed and presented based on gender unless specific circumstances such as protection of privacy speak against it."

National development plans

Countries can also use their national development plans, some of which are mandated by law, to introduce special mentions of gender policies or objectives and the consequent need to incorporate gender statistics for monitoring purposes. Such is the case of the National Development Strategy to 2030 of the **Dominican Republic**, approved by Law No. 1-12 (Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, 2012^[37]), which incorporated gender equality across its strategic objectives and mandated the NSO to co-ordinate the generation of data and statistics needed to monitor and evaluate the Development Strategy, ensuring that the NSS provides information disaggregated, at least, by sex and age at the regional level.

National strategies for the development of statistics

Integrating gender data into statistical strategic plans has the advantage of being a faster process than revising statistical legislation and allows for immediately including policy priorities and mobilising resources. Many low- and middle-income countries use the NSDS for scaling up the production and dissemination of gender data and investing in statistical capacities. An NSDS is a five- or one-year strategy aligned with a country's national development plan and other international and regional data requirements. It is guided by inclusiveness, transparency and accountability principles. The NSDS is a framework, a process and a product that should be government-owned and elaborated through the collective and co-ordinated work of the NSS (PARIS21, n.d.^[28]). The analysis showed that in 18% of countries (mostly low and lower-middle income), where statistics law does not explicitly mandate sex/gender-disaggregation and does not specify the enabling environment for gender data, governments used the NSDS to strengthen gender data capacity. For example, **Maldives** integrated gender data across its 10-year NSDS 2021-2030 as a cross-cutting aspect, with gender data integrated into all stages and sectors of the development of official statistics (MBS Maldives, 2021^[38]). The NSDS further proposed a list of priority gender equality indicators and called for a dedicated gender statistics budget to be incorporated into the overall budget for statistical programmes. Following the launch of the NSDS, the Maldives Bureau of Statistics exerted efforts to constitute an inter-agency working group on gender statistics and mobilise targeted resources for gender data. The Asian Development Bank then supported these efforts through its "Strengthening Gender Inclusive Initiatives in Maldives (SGII) Project", which aimed to address critical gender data gaps in the NSS (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2024^[39]). In 2024, the Maldives Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Family and Social Development launched a complementary and targeted National Strategy

for the Development of Gender Statistics 2025-2030 (Maldives Bureau of Statistics, 2024^[40]) to further reinforce capacity development and resource mobilisation for gender data.

Although the **Uganda** Bureau of Statistics Act (1998) does not specifically mention an NSDS nor disaggregation, in 2020, the Board of Directors adopted the **Third Plan for National Statistical Development (PNSD III)** as the national framework for guiding statistical production and development in the country. The PNSD III covers the period FY 2020/21 to FY 2024/25 and institutionalises the gender perspective in the statistical production and use. The PNSD III "... adopts a holistic approach in addressing the relevant development agenda and takes into account traditional and non-traditional data sources, cross-cutting issues such as gender..." (p.8).¹² It also promotes engagement and co-ordination at the NSS level and with national and local authorities, the private sector, and civil society organisations to foster gender statistics. One of its goals is to strengthen systems for data production and development in the NSS, which includes the strategic objective of institutionalising the generation and use of gender statistics. Among its outputs is an updated gender statistics capacity-building programme. In its turn, the Gender Statistics Advisory Group is responsible for ensuring all key data producers in the NSS mainstream gender along the data value chain. In terms of co-ordination, the Higher Local Government and National Statistics Committees "shall prioritise the design and implementation of the PNSD in each ministry, department and agency/local government and inform the National Statistics Technical Committee." In turn, ministry, department and agency statistics committees oversee ensuring that "statistics are gender-responsive, generated and disseminated to relevant stakeholders and the general public."

Similarly, Bangladesh's [NSDS 2021-2030](#) (the 2013 **Bangladesh Statistics Act** mandates the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics to develop it) included strategic actions related to gender statistics. Among them, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics committed to developing a database on gender-disaggregated statistics from all possible sources; conducting Surveys on Violence against Women once every two years; establishing a framework for producing the necessary statistics; and reviewing all national and international agreed-upon policies and commitments for accelerating gender equality and empowerment. In terms of co-ordinating, the NSDS promotes the integration of gender into the NSS by engaging the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Social Welfare, the private sector, civil society organisations, and development partners.

Guidelines

Another common initiative is the adoption of manuals or guidelines incorporating the gender perspective into all or some of the phases of the statistical production process.¹³ These can be considered an important first step in mainstreaming the gender perspective into statistical operations and certainly complements a future update of the statistics laws.

As far as the guidelines on gender data are concerned, **Mexico's** "[Guidelines for Incorporating the Gender Perspective in the SNIEG \(National System of Statistical and Geographic Information\)](#)", contains provisions stating that "...the state units shall consider in the activities of production, integration and dissemination of information of national interest, in order to contribute to the planning, design and evaluation of public policies aimed at eliminating social, economic, political and cultural inequalities between women and men". It was published in the Official Gazette (2015), becoming part of the regulations of the SNIEG. In terms of general guidelines, those elaborated by the UN regional commissions are usually endorsed by countries of the respective regions and considered mandatory and part of their statistical regulations.

Other solutions

Countries can also consider the creation of inter-agency committees on gender issues, including statistics, which are usually chaired by the national women's or gender equality machinery or the NSO and are also an important channel for mainstreaming gender in statistics and ensuring human, technological and

financial resources and co-ordination aspects associated with production, dissemination and use of gender statistics. Formal agreements such as a memorandum of understanding are also usually used to set the conditions for those collaborations and provide stability to data sharing or consolidating gender statistics production and dissemination. In low- and middle-income countries, they should also be supported by the presence of UN institutions and other development partners.

Moreover, as a result of this collaborative work,¹⁴ gender observatories could be created that provide a platform to enhance the knowledge and use of gender statistics and involve other relevant stakeholders (civil society organisations, academia, etc.) that could provide feedback on the statistics. Their involvement could be even more active, and they could collaborate on defining methodologies for those gender indicators and statistics that do not yet have a clear agreed-upon methodology.

The previous examples are a non-exhaustive list of possible arrangements, some of which could take the form of a legal document for its implementation, that are worth considering when trying to mainstream gender into the statistical legal framework. These should be perceived as complementary tools to an update of the statistical legislation, which would help to reduce gaps in gender data and statistics and improve evidence-based private and public decision making.

4 Conclusions

Slow progress towards gender equality and persisting data gaps make it difficult to monitor and achieve progress for women and girls. Fit-for-purpose legal frameworks are essential to promote an effectively functioning NSS, empower NSOs to co-ordinate the NSS, interact with the wider data ecosystem and ensure the delivery of quality data for informed policy making, including gender statistics. However, a critical challenge lies in mainstreaming gender into the NSS and addressing the barriers to gender data use.

A review of 108 statistics laws worldwide reveals the limited scope of current support for gender data. Only 32% of the laws analysed mandate the disaggregation of statistics by sex or gender, which, while necessary, is not sufficient to enable the production and accessibility of comprehensive gender statistics. Only one third of statistics laws worldwide explicitly mandate sex/gender-disaggregation, 31% have at least one provision that supports the enabling environment, 22% of laws include at least one provision that supports the production of gender data, and only 5% incorporate a provision related to accessibility. This shortfall stems from the lack of a systemic understanding of gender data capacity needs and insufficient prioritisation of gender mainstreaming that fails to create enabling conditions for their systematic production and dissemination. Explicit mention of sex/gender-disaggregation and provisions supporting enabling environment, although still rare, remain the most common measures of supporting gender data capacity in statistics laws. In high-income countries, these two provisions occur more often than in countries of lower income.

Countries may choose to strengthen gender data capacity when modernising their statistics law or use other solutions, such as gender equality laws or policy instruments. In the first case, the Generic Law on Official Statistics offers a model for incorporating gender-sensitive provisions into statistical legislation, ensuring sustainability and consistency in gender data production. The modernisation of statistics laws supporting gender data can include defining gender statistics in law; mandating a disaggregation by relevant variables to promote intersectionality; and supporting data sharing, co-ordination and accessibility. Such changes enhance the standardisation and visibility of gender statistics, enabling better links across data systems. Intersectional provisions allow for a multifactorial analysis of inequalities, addressing the complex and intertwined nature of gender discrimination. However, legal updates require political will and co-ordination across stakeholders. Therefore, countries with outdated legal frameworks or limited political support for legislative updates can pursue interim strategies, such as incorporating gender perspectives into gender equality laws or strategic plans for statistical capacity development. The analysis revealed that in 18% of cases—primarily low and lower-middle-income countries—where statistical laws lacked gender-data provisions, governments relied on the NSDS to mandate gender data production or enhance gender data capacity. These additional measures can take place regardless of the pace of reforms in statistics legislation and may, in some cases, be easier to implement than revising the statistics law or passing a gender equality law.

Further research should focus on measuring the outcomes and impact of legal provisions on the actual gender data capacity and uptake. While there is no universal solution to addressing the challenges affecting gender capacity, a multipronged approach is important. By combining legislative reform with interim measures and leveraging existing guidelines, countries can strengthen their NSS, advance gender equality and better meet the needs of diverse populations.

Annex A. Key concepts and definitions

The following set of definitions of concepts is used throughout the document, mostly based on the United Nations *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical System* (UNSD, 2023^[27]), unless otherwise noted.

Administrative data: Data collected by a government ministry, department or agency primarily for administrative (not research or statistical) purposes. These administrative purposes are related to the corresponding executive or lawful functions such as authorisations, registrations, permits, payments, sanctions, control, etc.

Big data: Data generated by business or government transactions, social media, phone logs, communication devices, web scraping, sensors, etc., characterised by high volume, velocity and variety.

Data ecosystem: The entire network of data collectors, data producers, data analysts and other data users that directly or indirectly collect, process, disseminate, analyse and/or otherwise consume data and associated services within a specified country or region. The data ecosystem within a country is broader than the national statistical system because it includes all producers of data, not simply those producing official statistics, and it includes all users of data.

Gender: Socially constructed differences in the attributes and opportunities associated with being female or male. Gender refers to social interactions and relationships between women and men. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman, or man, in a given context. In official statistics, gender is distinct from sex.

Gender statistics: Statistics with the objective to “reflect differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men in all areas of life”. They are characterised by the following aspects: “data are collected and presented by sex as a primary and overall classification; data reflect gender issues; data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives; data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender biases” (UN DESA, 2016^[5]).

National statistical office (NSO): The main producer of official statistics in a country and/or the organisation responsible for co-ordinating all activities related to the development, production and dissemination of official statistics in the national statistical system.

National statistical system (NSS): Comprises the national statistical office and all other producers of official statistics in the country.

Official statistics: Statistics produced according to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by a national statistical office or by another producer of official statistics mandated by the national government or certified by the national statistical office to compile statistics for its specific domain.

Principle of intersectionality: Promotes indicators be disaggregated according to relevant variables (e.g. gender, age, geographic distribution, ethnicity) and their intersections (e.g. gender and age, age and geography) to highlight the multifactorial and entangled nature of gender inequalities.

Producer of official statistics: An organisational entity within a government ministry, department or agency, including the national statistical office, that develops, produces and disseminates official statistics.

Statistical confidentiality: Ensuring that individual data collected by, or in possession of, a producer of official statistics are used exclusively for statistical purposes and in such a way that natural or legal persons cannot be identified, either directly or indirectly.

Statistical data: Data collected, processed or disseminated by a statistical organisation for statistical purposes.

Statistics law: National legal framework governing the development, production and dissemination of official statistics. The statistics law may be complemented by, and further articulated in, bylaws such as regulations, orders and decrees. The statistics law is applicable to the national statistical office and may be partially or fully applicable to other producers of official statistics.

Annex B. List of countries by the availability of gender data provisions in their statistical legislation

Table B.1. List of countries by the availability of gender data provisions in their statistical legislation

No.	Country	Statistics law reference year (or latest update)	Statistics law refers to sex/gender disaggregation	Provisions in statistics laws that can be aligned to gender data capacity areas		
				Enabling environment for gender data	Gender data production	Gender data accessibility
1	Afghanistan	2009	No	No	No (c)	No
2	Argentina	1968	No	No	No	No
3	Australia	2017	Yes	Yes	No	No
4	Austria	2000	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
5	Bangladesh	1974	No	No (b)	No	No
6	Belgium	2009	No	No	No	No
7	Benin	2022	No	No	No	No
8	Bhutan	1991	No	No (b)	No	No
9	Bolivia	2021	No	No	No (c)	No
10	Bulgaria	2021	No	No	No	No
11	Burkina Faso	2000	No	No	No (c)	No
12	Burundi	2007	No	No	No	No
13	Cabo Verde	2009	No	No	No	No
14	Cambodia	2015	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
15	Cameroon	1991	Yes	Yes	No	No
16	Canada	1985	No	No	No	No
17	Central African Republic	2001	No	No (b)	No	No
18	Chad	1999	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
19	Chile	1970	No (a)	No	No	No
20	Colombia	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
21	Comoros	1951	No	No (b)	No	No
22	Congo	1972	No	No	No (c)	No
23	Costa Rica	2019	No	No (b)	No	No
24	Côte d'Ivoire	2013	No	No	No	No
25	Croatia	2020	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
26	Czechia	1995	Yes	Yes	No	No

27	Denmark	2000	No	No	No	No
28	Dominica	1986	No	No	No	No
29	Ecuador	1976	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
30	Estonia	2010	Yes	Yes	No	No
31	Ethiopia	2005	No	No	No (c)	No
32	Fiji	1970	No	No	No	No
33	Finland	2004	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
34	France	1951	No	No	No	No
35	Gambia	2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
36	Germany	2022	No (a)	No	No	No
37	Ghana	2019	Yes	Yes	No	No
38	Greece	1956	No	No	No	No
39	Grenada	1961	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
40	Guinea	2014	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
41	Guinea-Bissau	2007	Yes	Yes	No	No
42	Guyana	1991	No	No (b)	No	No
43	Haiti	1951	No	No	No (c)	No
44	Honduras	2000	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
45	Hungary	1993	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
46	Iceland	2007	No (a)	No	No	No
47	Ireland	1993	No	No	No	No
48	Israel	2008	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
49	Italy	2010	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
50	Japan	2007	No	No (b)	No	No
51	Kenya	2019	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
52	Korea	2007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
53	Kyrgyz Republic	2019	No	No	No	No
54	Latvia	1997	No	No	No (c)	No
55	Lesotho	2001	No	No	No	No
56	Liberia	2004	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
57	Lithuania	1993	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
58	Luxembourg	1962	No	No	No (c)	No
59	Madagascar	2018	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
60	Malawi	2013	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
61	Mali	2005	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
62	Marshall Islands	2004	No	No	No	No
63	Mauritania	2005	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
64	Mexico	2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
65	Micronesia	1988	No	No	No	No
66	Mozambique	1996	No	No	No	No
67	Myanmar	2018	No	No	No (c)	No
68	Netherlands	2003	No	No	No	No
69	New Zealand	1975	No	No	No (c)	No

70	Nicaragua	1981	No	No	No	No
71	Niger	1999	No	No	No (c)	No
72	Nigeria	2007	No	No (b)	No	No
73	Norway	2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
74	Pakistan	2011	No	No	No	No
75	Papua New Guinea	2006	No	No	No	No
76	Peru	1990	No	No	No (c)	No
77	Poland	1995	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
78	Portugal	2008	Yes	Yes	No	No
79	Romania	2009	No	No	No (c)	No
80	Rwanda	2013	No	No	No	No
81	Samoa	1971	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
82	Senegal	1966	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
83	Sierra Leone	2002	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
84	Slovak Republic	2001	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
85	Slovenia	2001	Yes	Yes	No	No
86	Solomon Islands	1970	No	No	No	No
87	Somalia	2020	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
88	South Sudan	2011	No	No	No	No
89	Spain	2022	No (a)	No	No	No
90	St. Lucia	2001	No	No	No	No
91	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1983	No	No	No	No
92	Sudan	2003	No	No	No	No
93	Sweden	2001	Yes	Yes	No	No
94	Switzerland	1992	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
95	Tajikistan	1997	No	No	No	No
96	Tanzania	2019	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
97	Timor-Leste	2003	No	No	No	No
98	Togo	1992	No	No (b)	No (c)	No
99	Tonga	2015	No	No	No (c)	No
100	Türkiye	2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
101	Tuvalu	2008	No	No	No	No
102	Uganda	1998	No	No (b)	No	No
103	United Kingdom	2007	Yes	No	No	No
104	United States	1995	No	No	No	No
105	Uruguay	1994	No	No	No (c)	No
106	Vanuatu	2022	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
107	Zambia	2018	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
108	Zimbabwe	2020	No	No	No	No

Notes: a) The statistics law does not mandate sex/gender disaggregation, however there are other legal instruments (decrees or laws) that establish the collection of information disaggregated by sex/gender; b) The statistics law establishes a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, and/or a work plan, which includes provisions on the collection of sex/gender-disaggregated data; c) the statistics law mandates for the implementation of population censuses and the use of administrative data (although without explicitly referring to disaggregation by sex/gender).

Annex C. Examples of laws addressing gender data enabling environment, production and accessibility

Table C.1. Laws addressing gender data enabling environment, production and accessibility

Country/Gender Data Outlook Index dimension	Enabling environment	Production	Accessibility
Colombia Statistical law (Law 2335, 2023)	The law includes the “principle of inclusion” among principles governing the official statistics, which states “All statistical production activities will be carried out with respect for the country’s diversity, for the different characteristics of some population groups and seeking to make visible the living conditions of those whose rights are violated due to their age, ethnicity, cultural identity, nationality, gender, sex, political or ideological positions...” (Article 4, Law No. 2335) (see also Box 8).	The provisions contained in this law apply to “data production sources for the production of statistical information, among others, natural or legal persons, public or private that, due to their functions, in development of their corporate purpose or by legal, statutory or regulatory provision, must provide data or administrative records to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) for the production of statistical or official information” (Article 2, Law No. 2335). The law introduces also “alternative sources” as a “set of data different from those collected through traditional statistical operations (censuses, surveys or administrative records) and that have potential statistical use. These data are obtained from sources such as: non-tabular data, mobile phone records, remote or direct sensor data, transactions, social networks, among others” (Article 5, Law No. 2335).	The law introduces also the so-called “differential approach”, among principles governing official statistics, which consists of an “analysis method that allows obtaining and disseminating information on population groups with distinct characteristics due to their age, ethnicity, cultural identity, nationality, migratory status, sex, gender identity, political or ideological stances, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, economic or employment situation, among other inclusion criteria; to guide public and private decision making” (Article 4, Law No. 2335). “Accessibility: statistical information must be presented in a clear and accessible way for the entire population, so as it can be easily understood by anyone” (Article 4, Law No. 2335).
Israel Statistic Ordinance 5732 of 1972, amended in 2016	The ordinance states that after consultation with the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women (as defined in the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women Law, 5758-1998), “The statistician shall appoint...an employee who shall be responsible for the implementation of this section, including preparation of programmes for the collection and	The ordinance states that “the collection and processing of statistics relating to individuals and the publication of the results by the Bureau shall include statistics by sex ..., even if they do not pertain to matters that have gender-related implications” (Article 7A-a).	The Ordinance indicates that “The Bureau shall publish, at least once a year, results deriving from the collection and processing of statistics that include statistics by sex” (Article 7A-c), and that the statistician “shall be responsible for the implementation of this section, including preparation of programmes for the collection and processing of statistics, the development of statistical classifications and co-operation with state agencies in all that relates to the collection and processing of statistics by sex”

	<p>processing of statistics, the development of statistical classifications and co-operation with state agencies in all that relates to the collection and processing of statistics by sex." A previous amendment (2008) created a Public Council for Statistics, with representatives of state agencies, institutions of higher education and research and public bodies and of experts on statistics and on economic and social subjects, and where it was declared that "...appropriate expression shall be given to the representation of both sexes, to the extent that circumstances permit" (Article 7A-d).</p>		(Article 7A-d).
<p>Liberia Statistical Act of 2004</p>	<p>The act in its preamble recognises "the institutionalisation of gender and geographic mainstreaming to facilitate the understanding and application of gender and geographic analysis (in the development process as means of capturing and addressing systematically gender and geographic inequality in opportunities, capacities and development)". To materialise this statement, the act establishes that one of the goals of the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Service (LISGIS) is: "to co-ordinate, monitor and supervise the NSSDS [National Statistics and Spatial Data System] and NSSD [National Statistics and Spatial Database] to allow for the provision of holistic gender and geographic sensitive analysis for timely, relevant and acceptable standards of information to institutions of the government, the business and the wider national and international communities" (Section 50A.5). It then reinforces it by defining that one of the objectives of the LISGIS is the formulation of an integrated gender- and environment-sensitive national statistical and spatial database (Section 50A.6), and that the Director-General has among its functions to "ensure that statistics and geo-information produced reflect a gender and geographic perspective" (Section 50A.14).</p>	<p>The act specifies as one of the functions and responsibilities of the LISGIS to "promote and encourage the use of common and new concepts, methodologies, definitions, procedures, nomenclatures and standards including geographic considerations and gender and development, in the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information, to ensure integration of NSS as well as an integrated national statistical database" (Section 50A.8, item 18). As a result, one of the objectives of the LISGIS (Section 50A.6) is the formulation of an integrated gender- and environment-sensitive national statistical and spatial database.</p>	<p>The act encourages stakeholder engagement by considering the Ministry of Gender and Development as one of the members of the Board of Directors of the LISGIS and specifies as one of the board's powers and functions to "monitor the development and functioning of the national statistical and geo-information system and the national statistical and geo database taking into account gender, geographic and environmental considerations, using basic human development indicators" (Section 50A.11, 2).</p>

Annex D. Key global commitments on gender inequality and their references to statistics

First UN World Conference on Women (1975, Mexico City)

Conference organised by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women during the UN-declared International Women's Year (1975), which recognised the lack of data and indicators as an important obstacle to understand and address women's situation through public policies. It presented a ten-year World Plan of Action and a comprehensive set of guidelines for the advancement of women regarding gender equality and the participation of women in political, economic and social life. It was followed by conferences in 1980 (Copenhagen), 1985 (Nairobi) and 1995 (Beijing), after which reviews of progress on gender equality have been conducted every five years through the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979)

CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and entered into force as an International Treaty in 1981. States that sign and ratify it commit to ensure – *de jure* and *de facto* – equality between women and men. Specifically, it called countries to "... take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men" (Article 3).

In brief, the structure of CEDAW begins by defining discrimination against women (Article 1), followed by a set of measures and obligations for countries to end discrimination in all its forms (Articles 2-17), for instance in the areas of education, healthcare and family planning, employment, marriage and family life, economic and social life, rurality, equality before the law, and political and public life, among others. It then established and defined the functioning of the CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (Articles 18-22), with the objective to periodically review countries' progress. It concludes with a set of definitions (Articles 23-30) about the management of the Convention, including conflict resolution. It also invites countries to incorporate the sex/gender variable (and later, the age variable) into their population censuses, economic and social surveys.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women (1995, in Beijing)

The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** established a set of strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in 12 "critical areas of concern", thus introducing a gender perspective at all stages and levels of policies, legislation, programmes and projects (Strategic Objective H.2). These strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality were: 1) women and poverty; 2) education and training of women;

3) women and health; 4) violence against women; 5) women and armed conflict; 6) women and the economy; 7) women in power and decision making; 8) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; 9) women's human rights; 10) women and the media; 11) women and the environment; 12) the girl child.

Regarding the need for statistics, Strategic Objective H.3 referred to the generation and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data for planning and evaluation, by presenting an extended list of actions to be adopted by regional and international statistics entities, such as:

- Ensure that statistics related to individuals are collected, compiled, analysed and presented by sex/gender and age and reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society.
- Collect, compile, analyse and present on a regular basis data disaggregated by age, sex/gender, socio-economic and other relevant indicators, including number of dependants, for use in policy and programme planning and implementation.
- Involve centres for women's studies and research organisations in developing and testing appropriate indicators and research methodologies to strengthen gender analysis, as well as in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the goals of the Platform for Action.
- Designate or appoint staff to strengthen gender statistics programmes and ensure co-ordination, monitoring and linkage to all fields of statistical work, and prepare output that integrates statistics from the various subject areas.
- Improve data collection on the full contribution of women and men to the economy, including their participation in the informal sector(s).
- Develop more comprehensive knowledge of all forms of work and employment by:
 - Improving data collection on the unremunerated work which is already included in the United Nations System of National Accounts, such as in agriculture, particularly subsistence agriculture, and other types of non-market production activities.
 - Improving measurements that at present underestimate women's unemployment and underemployment in the labour market.
 - Developing methods, in the appropriate forums, for assessing the value, in quantitative terms, of unremunerated work that is outside national accounts, such as caring for dependants and preparing food, for possible reflection in satellite or other official accounts that may be produced separately from but are consistent with core national accounts, with a view to recognising the economic contribution of women and making visible the unequal distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work between women and men.
- Develop an international classification of activities for time-use statistics that is sensitive to the differences between women and men in remunerated and unremunerated work, and collect data disaggregated by sex/gender. At the national level, subject to national constraints:
 - Conduct regular time-use studies to measure, in quantitative terms, unremunerated work, including recording those activities that are performed simultaneously with remunerated or other unremunerated activities.
 - Measure, in quantitative terms, unremunerated work that is outside national accounts and work to improve methods to assess its value, and accurately reflect its value in satellite or other official accounts that are separate from but consistent with core national accounts.
- Improve concepts and methods of data collection on the measurement of poverty among women and men, including their access to resources.

- Strengthen vital statistical systems and incorporate gender analysis into publications and research; give priority to gender differences in research design and in data collection and analysis to improve data on morbidity; and improve data collection on access to health services, including access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, maternal care and family planning, with special priority for adolescent mothers and elder care.
- Develop improved gender-disaggregated and age-specific data on the victims and perpetrators of all forms of violence against women, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, incest and sexual abuse, and trafficking in women and girls, as well as on violence by agents of the state.
- Improve concepts and methods of data collection on the participation of women and men with disabilities, including their access to resources.

By governments:

- Ensure the regular production of a statistical publication on gender that presents and interprets topical data on women and men in a form suitable for a wide range of non-technical users.
- Ensure that producers and users of statistics in each country regularly review the adequacy of the official statistical system and its coverage of gender issues, and prepare a plan for needed improvements, where necessary.
- Develop and encourage the development of quantitative and qualitative studies by research organisations, trade unions, employers, the private sector and non-governmental organisations on the sharing of power and influence in society, including the number of women and men in senior decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors.
- Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)

The **2030 Agenda** presented 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 targets and 231 data indicators, 52 out of which are gender-specific indicators. SDG 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, includes 14 gender indicators, and the remaining 38 gender-specific indicators are integrated across 10 other SDGs. Those refer to: poverty; hunger; health and well-being; quality of education; decent work and economic growth; inequalities; sustained cities and communities; climate action; peace, justice and strong institutions; and partnership for the goals. The remaining six SDGs do not explicitly incorporate gender indicators.

Regarding SDG 5, its first indicator (Nr. 5.1.1) refers to “Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex”. As of December 2024, it is classified as a Tier I indicator, meaning that it is “conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50% of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant” (UNDESA, 2025^[41]).

In turn, SDG 17 refers to strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, and its indicator 17.18 establishes that “By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing states, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts”.

Additionally, the Global Indicator Framework includes the overarching statement that: “Sustainable Development Goal indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex/gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics”.¹⁵

Cape Town Global Plan for Sustainable Development Data (2017)

In 2017, the **Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data** highlighted the unprecedented demand for data and statistics to monitor progress of the 2030 Agenda. It also realised the urgent need for strengthening countries' NSS, mainly through capacity-building initiatives, global alliances between countries and organisation with special considerations to assist less developed countries, strongly involving academia, government, the private sector and civil society.

To address these issues, the plan proposed six strategic areas with their respective objectives and key actions: 1) co-ordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development; 2) innovation and modernisation of the NSS; 3) strengthening of basic statistical activities and programmes, with a particular focus on addressing the monitoring needs of the 2030 Agenda; 4) dissemination and use of sustainable development data; 5) multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data; and 6) mobilising resources and co-ordinating efforts for statistical capacity building. Under strategic area 3, where one of the objectives refers to "strengthen[ing] and expand[ing] data on all groups of the population to ensure that no one is left behind", the plan explicitly emphasises the importance of gender statistics, by adopting as a key action "promot[ing] the systematic mainstreaming of gender equality in all phases of planning, production and usage of data and statistics".

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Notes

¹ Throughout the text, “gender data” and “gender statistics” refer to a similar concept, whereby “raw” data is a necessary component of statistics and provides an interpretation and summary of data. The international community’s initial focus on gender statistics has gradually moved to encompass broader gender data, pointing to the importance of administrative records (which are not statistics) and alternative data (e.g. big data, citizen data, etc.).

² The International Labour Organization has been actively integrating own production of services into the Labour Force Survey to enhance the recognition of all forms of work, including unpaid care and domestic work, as part of their efforts to ensure comprehensive labour statistics.

³ For further reading see: https://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2023-10/Coordination_Capacity_in_NSS.pdf and https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Asia-Pacific-Training-Curriculum/Module5/Module5_Syllabus_Methods%20for%20data%20collection%20and%20estimation.pdf.

⁴ 2024 saw the approval of the *Guide to Producing Statistics on Time Use* by the United Nations Statistical Commission, which should assist countries in strengthening that data collection.

⁵ It should be noted that the analysis of statistics laws does not intend to replicate the results of the *Gender Data Outlook’s* Index, but to look for an alignment of their legal provisions that facilitates gender statistics and data with the dimensions presented by that framework. Moreover, this analysis of statistics laws covers a different sample of countries.

⁶ A formal definition of gender statistics is presented and developed in Box 3.

⁷ Discrimination includes both intentional discrimination and consistent differences in outcomes that are known and not adequately addressed.

⁸ The main source of information on statistics laws was the PARIS21 Statistical Law Navigator. See: <https://statisticalcapacitymonitor.org/statistical-law-navigator>.

⁹ Given that, at the time of writing, the *Gender Data Outlook’s* dimension “use” requires further research it is not considered in this report.

¹⁰ The authors note the growing awareness of the importance of disaggregation and analysis by gender and intersections with other characteristics. As this report reflects, not everything that matters is currently

measured. Consequently, an enabling environment for gender statistics needs to also enable statistical development. This will require testing and proposing concepts and a methodology prior to international agreement.

¹¹ The quality of gender data and statistics refers to statistical quality dimensions such as, for example, accuracy, coherence and timeliness; but also to the ability of data to reflect peoples' lived experience, which can be found in the "relevance" for the user, where "everything that matters, is measured". A good discussion on relevance and quality can be found at: <https://equalityinsights.org/data-lift-for-gender-equality>.

¹² Uganda is also highlighted in the *Gender Data Outlook* Index as one of the low-income countries with the highest Index, revealing a high level of gender data capacity.

¹³ The United Nations' *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems* (UNSD, 2023^[27]) presents an extensive list of such guidelines, in its Section 9.10: Gender Statistics.

¹⁴ For example, the Gender Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. See: <https://oig.cepal.org/en>.

¹⁵ Resolution 68/261.

Legal Frameworks for Gender Data across Countries

Status and Opportunities

Three decades since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and ten years of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, monitoring progress towards gender equality continues to be hampered by persistent data gaps. A fit-for-purpose statistical framework is essential for national statistical systems to produce reliable gender data and statistics. Such legislation establishes mandates, defining the roles and responsibilities of key institutions, including national statistics offices, in designing, producing, and disseminating gender data and statistics. However, growing understanding of gender issues and their measurement have outpaced the capacity of governments to develop appropriate legislation - particularly in resource-constrained statistical systems. Despite undeniable progress in closing gender data gaps globally, the full potential of legal frameworks to illuminate gender inequalities and support monitoring efforts has not been reached.

This report analyses statistical laws from more than 100 countries and highlights opportunities for gender mainstreaming in statistical legislation. It advocates for a more intentional approach to strengthening the production, accessibility, and overall enabling environment for gender data availability and use. Additionally, the report proposes legal and policy interventions to help governments produce high-quality statistics essential for tracking progress toward gender equality.

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