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IN BRIEF:

MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT IN BANGLADESH

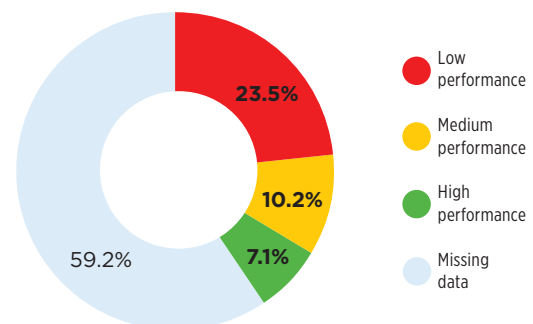
THE ISSUE

A national assessment on gender statistics, conducted in 2018, revealed three inter-related challenges:

- The availability of gender data and statistics are uneven in several aspects – across sectors and topics, as well as in regularity and timeliness. While there are numerous laws, policies and plans to address gender equality and women’s empowerment, the gender data and statistics needed for monitoring and reporting are not available for many areas, and those statistics that are available are not updated.
- Surveys and censuses are not conducted regularly. Moreover, the national statistical system (NSS) does not have designated statistics – meaning there is no assurance that data collection will be resourced and done on a regular basis.

FIGURE 1

How is Bangladesh doing on gender data?



Source: [Women Count Data Hub](#)

- Systems to facilitate efficient access and dissemination are virtually non-existent. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the statistical system in general do not have a dissemination policy or advance-release calendar. Access to statistics is complicated for non-government users.

WOMEN COUNT RESPONSE:

- **Creating an enabling environment:** Coordination mechanisms were established to strengthen coordination gender statistics activities in the NSS.
- **Increasing data production:** Technical capacity of the national statistical system is being strengthened to collect data on unpaid care work to improve monitoring of the SDGs.
- **Improving data accessibility and use:** User-producer dialogues will be organized to improve gender statistics analysis and use in planning, budgeting, policy-making and decision-making.

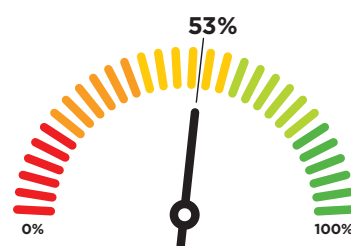
RESULTS

Since 2018, progress in implementing planned activities has been relatively slow due to significant delays in formalizing a letter of agreement with BBS, finalized and approved in the first quarter of 2019. Given the pace of implementation, as a result of the Mid-term Review, the Bangladesh project will be phased out and concluded at the end of 2020. Nevertheless, several activities took place in 2019:

1. Creating an enabling environment

- **A Letter of Agreement was finalized with the BBS resulting in increased collaboration with UN Women on gender statistics.** The Letter of Agreement between UN Women and BBS was signed in March 2019 and announced at the UN Statistical Commission. The agreement aims to strengthen institutional mechanisms governing the production, dissemination and use of gender statistics in the country. Having the Women Count Letter of Agreement signed has enabled the Bangladesh country office to increase collaboration with BBS on climate change and disaster risk-reduction statistics.
- **Four coordination committees were established to improve decision-making on gender statistics.** The committee include: a i) Steering Committee chaired by Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) to serve as a forum to improve coordination within the NSS; ii)

FIGURE 2
Measuring Progress in 2019



Administrative delays hampered the project. However, there has been some progress towards improving coordination on gender statistics and capacity-building activities on time use.

a Technical Committee chaired by BBS, to guide the overall institutional decisions of BBS; iii) a Monitoring Committee chaired by SID, to monitor gender statistics activities and the Women Count project and iv) a Working Committee chaired by BBS, discusses current methodological and technical issues as the counterpart of the Women Count project and prepares issues for consideration at higher-level committees. The Committees have an important role to informing to decisions on key institutional and methodological issues related to production, use and dissemination of gender statistics. UN Women representatives are members of Steering, Monitoring and Working Committees and provides technical and financial support to their functioning.

- **Coordination was strengthened to advocate for the inclusion of gender indicators in Bangladesh's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEFSDG) for the SDGs.** UN Women provided technical support to the General Economics Division (GED), SID and BBS to formulate recommendations and a costed action plan for addressing the gaps in gender-specific indicators in the MEFSDG-Bangladesh and corresponding data requirements based on systematic review and assessment. UN Women provided technical support to the Ministry of Planning to conduct a gender statistics assessment to identify gender data gaps, held consultations with GED, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, BBS and SID to propose a series of gender-related indicators on health, education, employment, unpaid care work, violence, for instance, that can be included in Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the SDGs. Inclusion of gender-related indicators will further strengthen

gender-responsive monitoring of the SDGs and will further enable the Government to measure progress on achieving gender equality commitments in the preparation of the next Five-Year National Plan

2. Increasing data production

- **Training strengthened the capacities of BBS to conduct the first national time-use survey.** UN Women organized, in collaboration with BBS, a one-week national workshop to initiate planning and design phase of the time-use survey. An international expert recruited by UN Women, led consultations on designing the time-use methodology and key survey design issues (such as sampling scheme, questionnaire composition, fieldwork organization, data collection methods and frequency). UN Women also supported BBS and SID representatives to attend the regional workshop on time-use survey methods organized by UN Women's Europe and Central Asia office, to further inform BBS's preparatory activities drawing on other countries' experiences. Data collection is expected to begin in 2020, however, continuing plans will depend on government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

- **Gender data identified as a key priority in Beijing+25 review as a result of UN Women's advocacy.** UN Women provided technical support to the

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to prepare the national comprehensive review of Beijing+25, through advocating for the inclusion of a set of gender-related indicators that can measure progress towards achieving gender equality and emphasizing the importance of the need for the Government to invest in production and use of gender data.. It is expected that the proposed gender-related set included in the report, can be used to inform the next 5-year plan to ensure it is gender-responsive.

PLANS FOR 2020*

- Providing technical support to the functions of the four-coordination mechanism;
- Supporting data collection activities, including conducting a time use survey and COVID-19 rapid assessment;
- Preparing three policy briefs using gender statistics data, on gender inequalities in the labour force, higher education and political participation in Bangladesh;
- Organizing user-producer dialogues with involving national and local government representatives, CSOs and researchers.

* Plans for 2020 may be further adjusted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.