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IN BRIEF:

MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT IN NEPAL

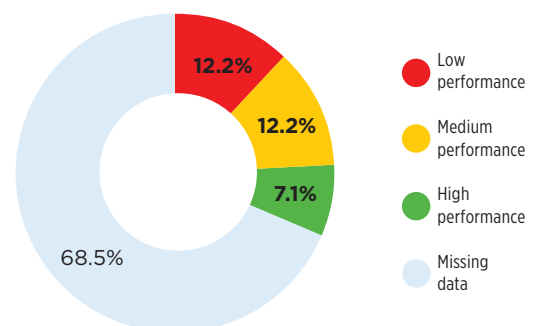
THE ISSUE

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

- Despite political will to monitor gender equality commitments, gender statistics are weak or lacking in Nepal. The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) does not specifically mention gender statistics. Due to ever-increasing demands for data and recent reforms, the mandate to produce statistics has been extended to several institutions, rendering the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) less effective as a leader and coordinator.
- Nepal lacks mechanisms to monitor many SDG targets, with data available for only 37% of all gender-related global indicators. Most data are

FIGURE 1

How is Nepal doing on gender data?



Source: [Women Count Data Hub](#)

extracted from national censuses and surveys, which are undertaken only every 5 or 10 years, limiting their effectiveness.

- Data accessibility is a key challenge for non-government users, with many stakeholders relying on personal and informal contacts to access gender data. When data is available, it is not always used effectively.

WOMEN COUNT RESPONSE:

- **Creating an enabling environment:** Partnership with the CBS is strengthened to improve coordination around the production and use of gender statistics in the National Statistics System.
- **Increasing data production:** Technical capacities of the CBS are strengthened to produce quality data on violence against women and gender identity in the 2021 Census round.
- **Improving data use accessibility and use:** User-producer dialogues are bringing together government, civil society organizations and development partners to understand the needs of data users and producers.

RESULTS

Since 2018, progress in implementation has been significantly delayed due to administrative delays in finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CBS, only finalized in December 2019. Although the process took two years, UN Women's continuous efforts to secure national commitment through negotiations with government counterparts, emphasizes the critical importance of having a formal partnership agreement in place, significantly impacting the pace of progress. For this reason and as a result of the Mid-term Review, the Women Count Nepal project will be phased out and concluded in December 2020. Nevertheless, several activities took place in 2019, building on efforts made during the previous year:

1. Creating an enabling environment

- **Partnership with CBS was officially launched to strengthen the production and use of gender data in Nepal.** In December 2019, UN Women and CBS signed a MoU to officially launch the Women Count project. The partnership has signaled the government's commitment in several areas, such as mapping quality gender-sensitive indicators to improve monitoring the SDGs, and engendering the

FIGURE 2
Measuring Progress in 2019



A Memorandum of Understanding was only finalized with the Central Bureau of Statistics in December 2019, resulting in significant administrative delays in implementation of activities in Nepal.

upcoming Census and promoting effective user-producer dialogues on areas of gender statistics including time use and violence against women.

- **A Gender Statistics Working Group (GSWG) is strengthening coordination on gender data.** The GSWG composed of the World Bank, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF and UN Women, is tasked with improving the coordination of gender-related statistical activities in Nepal and identifying and exploring synergies among different development actors. As a result of the initial meetings, members identified key issues related to gender data availability that required greater collaboration and will formally establish a working group to provide a platform for greater coordination.

2. Increasing data production

- **Nepal's 2021 Census will now collect data on gender identity and sexual orientation as a result of UN Women's advocacy.** UN Women facilitated several user-producer dialogues between the CBS, civil society organizations, representatives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) groups and UN Agencies to ensure that Nepal's LGBTIQ persons are properly counted in the 2021 population census. Lack of specific questions and a method to collect data on LGBTIQ persons, rendered the LGBTIQ population invisible in official national statistics. To overcome these challenges, UN Women in partnership with UNFPA organized a dialogue with the CBS and LGBTIQ groups, involving over 150 participants and resulting in an agreement

on the definition of LGBTIQ people, the identification of data collection methods, and an agreement to include a question on gender identity and sexual orientation in the upcoming Census 2021 questionnaire. UN Women will continue to collaborate with UNFPA to support the CBS to develop the questionnaire to ensure that gender is properly mainstreamed.

- **Training strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Women to lead the design of the national violence against women prevalence survey.** A workshop was jointly organized by UN Women, the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC) and UNFPA in May 2019, on how to conduct a Violence against Women Prevalence Survey. The workshop was attended by 104 participants from government, civil society organizations, development partners, UN agencies and academia to inform the planning and preparations of the survey. Following the workshop, the MoWCSC announced its commitment to lead the survey design in close collaboration and technical partnership with the CBS, UNFPA and UN Women. To strengthen MoWCSC's capacity to lead this process, UN Women supported the participation of MoWCSC representatives to participate in a four-week kNOwVAWdata training course offered by UNFPA, to build their skills in measuring the prevalence of VAW. Learnings from the course were applied to inform the design of the VAW survey protocol.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

- **Using Gender Data Award encouraged students to show the power of gender data to trigger change.** UN Women developed a new award for students who use gender data to create communications products that highlight whether progress towards gender equality is being made, focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The winners, developed an interactive [website](#) using data from the CBS, the Women Count Data Hub and other sources to visualize Nepal's progress towards achieving the SDGs. The award is part of UN Women's efforts to improve statistical literacy on gender data. The winning participants of the "[Using Gender Data Award](#)" will be invited to present their projects in 2020.

PLANS FOR 2020*

- Continuing support to CBS to engender the 2021 Census;
- Supporting the development of a National Gender Profile and other gender statistics reports using the SDGs, at the national and subnational levels;
- Finalizing the national competition on statistical literacy on gender data.

* Plans for 2020 may be further adjusted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.