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IN BRIEF:
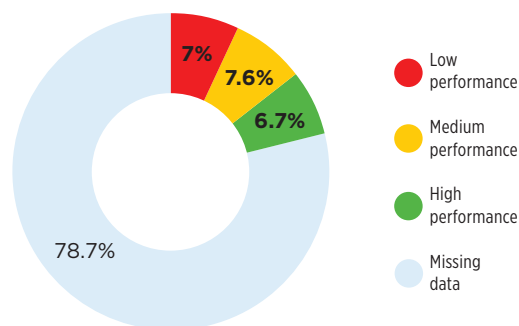
MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

THE ISSUE

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

- Only a quarter of countries in the region have a law on gender statistics or explicitly cover gender data in a general statistics law. The subregion with the lowest availability of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) gender data is the Pacific, which lacks data for more than half of gender indicators.

- Specialized surveys in important areas, such as time use, are not carried out regularly in most countries, either due to limited financial resources, lack of technical skills or both.

- National statistical systems often have limited capacity to disseminate and communicate data. This limits the ability of media, governments, women's organizations and other stakeholders to use gender statistics to inform decisions, research, advocacy, policies and programmes.

FIGURE 1

How is the Pacific doing on gender data?

7%
7.6%
6.7%
78.7%

Low performance
Medium performance
High performance
Missing data

Source: Women Count Data Hub

WOMEN COUNT RESPONSE:

- **Creating an enabling environment:** Regional coordination is being improved, working with organizations such as the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Pacific Community (SPC) and Pacific Island countries are being supported to mainstream gender in national plans through the Roadmap on Gender Statistics.

- **Increasing data production:** Technical capacities of national statistical systems are being strengthened and quality data on the gender and environment nexus, climate change, and women's land ownership to improve SDG monitoring and the leave no one behind.

- **Improving data accessibility and use:** Training on gender statistics is being standardized across the region, working with UN SIAP. Capacities of users are being strengthened to conduct gender data analysis, accessibility of gender statistics to all users is increased through better reporting, capacities to communicate gender data are increased through training, and data and metadata sharing encouraged to facilitate data flows, including to regional and global SDG-related databases.

RESULTS

Building on progress achieved in 2018, more countries are being supported to include gender in national development strategies in the Pacific; strengthening existing and forging new partnerships are leading to addressing critical gender data gaps in the region on environment, climate change and women's land ownership; training on gender statistics is increasingly being standardized as a result of a training curriculum developed in partnership with SIAP; and user-producer dialogues are facilitating greater collaboration on using gender data for advocacy and communication. Key results in 2019 include:

1. Creating an enabling environment

- **A 'Roadmap to Enhance the Production and Use of Gender Statistics in the Pacific' was developed and is expected to influence national strategies.** Developed in collaboration with SPC (the Pacific Community), representatives of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and women's machineries in the Pacific, the Roadmap was finalized and endorsed in September. Through the development of the Roadmap, 11 Pacific Island Countries and Territories have been supported jointly

FIGURE 2

Measuring Progress in 2019

87%

0%   100%

Progress was made in Asia and the Pacific as a result of supporting Pacific Island countries and territories to develop the Pacific Roadmap, training and capacity-building and improving data availability on gender and the environment.

with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to develop strategies to enhance the production and use of gender statistics in their countries. Some governments, such as Fiji and Palau have set up coordination groups to implement the Roadmap. Being the region with the lowest availability of gender data, the Roadmap is an important advocacy and planning tool to promote the use of gender statistics for policymaking in the Pacific.

- **Over 15 countries were supported to implement gender statistics initiatives.** In Viet Nam, UN Women and ESCAP provided training to the national statistical office to develop a priority set of gender indicators, which was endorsed by the Prime Minister of Viet Nam to provide a credible evidence base to inform policies, promote accountability on gender equality and improve SDG monitoring. In Mongolia, UN Women formalized an agreement with the National Statistical Office to fill gender data gaps on environment issues, such as measuring women's vulnerability in times of disasters. In Maldives, UN Women organized user-producer dialogues which identified national gender data needs including on women living in slums and female genital mutilation. Following the development of the Pacific Roadmap, technical support for the development of national implementation plans is being provided to interested countries, including Fiji and Palau.

- **Regional coordination spurred action on gender and the environment data.** As the region is the world's worst affected by the effects of climate change, it is most important that gender issues are accurately

captured in statistics to inform mitigation and response policies. UN Women in partnership with UN Environment, IUCN, and ESCAP, developed a study on how to measure the gender-environment nexus, identifies priorities and takes stock of related data and capacity gaps in the Asia-Pacific region, while proposing a regional Gender-Environment Indicator Set, with indicators from the SDGs and beyond. The results of the study were presented at a workshop where there was a formal call to establish an Expert Group on Gender-Environment Statistics to further coordinate these efforts to guide the production of related comparable data in more countries across the region.

• **Women Count is strengthening UN Women's Asia and the Pacific Regional Office work on gender data.** Before Women Count, no statistical work took place at the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Data analysis were outsourced to consultants, and most projects did not have data components. Now, several UN Women projects have data components included with technical support provided to project managers. For instance, support has been provided to the EmPower project (on Climate Change and Disasters) to design indicators on gender and disasters in partnership with NSOs in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia.

2. Increasing data production

• **A Training Curriculum on Gender Statistics was produced to standardize statistical training across the region.** The Subgroup on Gender Statistics Training, established in 2018 by UN Women and UN SIAP, rolled out a training curriculum on gender statistics which has already been used to train 158 statisticians and more than 70 data users to enhance the production and use of gender statistics. As a result of the trainings, national statistical training institutes and tertiary education institutions in Hong Kong, Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan have committed to incorporate these materials in their regular training and educational programmes in 2020–2021.

• **Countries are generating new data to measure "leave no one behind".** UN Women provided technical support to Timor Leste, Mongolia and the Philippines to reprocess existing data to generate estimates to measure 'leave no one behind.' These estimates are important because they offer a glimpse into the lives of the most disadvantaged women and can be used to inform intersectional and inclusive

policymaking. The Government of Mongolia has committed to produce and disseminate these estimates through its database regularly. To ensure more Asia-Pacific countries generate similar estimates, UN Women guidelines will be published in 2020.

• **UN Women and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) partnered to support countries to fill data gaps on women's ownership of agricultural land.** UN Women and FAO are working jointly to integrate a land ownership related module in planned surveys and agricultural censuses in 5 countries in the region (Bhutan, Lao, Mongolia, Nepal, Indonesia) to improve monitoring of SDG indicator 5.a.1 (women's ownership or secure rights over agricultural land). The methodological work through survey and census questions were developed and training and rollout will be carried in 2020.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

• **An e-training programme on using SDMX for gender data was launched together with EUROSTAT.** Developed by UN Women and EUROSTAT, this technical course was designed for statisticians, ICT specialists and any other data producers who wish to exchange data and metadata between databases seamlessly using Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX). To promote continuous learning, UN Women invited participants from 18 countries that have completed the online course for a follow-up face-to-face training. As a result of the trainings, Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Cambodia began implementing SDMX for data exchanges.

• **A regional workshop on communicating gender data builds bridge between data users and producers.** Organized by UN Women and ESCAP in June, the workshop brought together over 30 participants from NSOs, line ministries, civil society, media and academia to building dialogue between users and producers of data to better understand each other's needs and challenges, and together advocate for more and better gender data. One of the key outcomes of this workshop will be the development of a set of guidelines for communicating gender data, which will also set up standards for replicating this workshop in other regions.

• **"Using Gender Data Series" strengthened the skills of students to use gender data in journalism.** The "Using Gender Data Series" developed by UN Women is a series of events conducted in partnership with Universities and NSOs, for data and

journalism students to train them on how to find the right data, interpret it, and use it in innovative ways in their future careers. Over 150 students from the Universities of Hong Kong Baptist University, Mongolia's National University and National University of East Timor have benefited from the trainings so far.

- **Improved advocacy to put a spotlight on gender data for Beijing+25 Review.** UN Women developed advocacy tools that visualize progress made and challenged faced in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action in Asia and the Pacific 25 years after its adoption. It was used as an advocacy tool during the Beijing+25 Ministerial Conference to advocate the importance of gender statistics to measure progress. These materials are being used to inform the regional report being produced by UN Women and ESCAP that will be launched in 2020.

PLANS FOR 2020*

- Implementing the Roadmap on Gender Statistics in select Pacific Island Countries;
- Continue technical support to countries on microdata reprocessing, to generate "Leave No One Behind" estimates;
- Conducting regional rapid gender assessments on COVID-19;
- Supporting countries in the rollout of specialized surveys, such as Mongolia on gender-environment surveys;
- Conducting advanced training on SDMX for candidates completing the online training modules;
- Organizing user-producer dialogues to improve gender data dissemination and use.

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