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IN BRIEF: GLOBAL

MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT

THE ISSUE

The Women Count global policy support project aims to address three interrelated challenges:

- A weak policy space, and legal and financial environments, are barriers to progress. In many countries, the production of gender statistics is not specified in statistics laws and policies, and as a result, the sector is underprioritized and underfunded in national budgets.
- Technical and financial challenges limit the production of gender statistics. Areas such as violence against women, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and unpaid care and domestic work, are important to measure but are under resourced. Also at-risk are emerging areas, such as gender and poverty, gender pay gaps and women's participation in decision-making, where more methodological work is needed.
- Lack of access to data and limited user capacity to make use of gender statistics limit their ability to inform policies. Where data are available, they are not accessible or shared in user-friendly formats, impeding their analysis or use to inform evidence-based advocacy in decision-making. When data are not used to inform policy and advocacy, this leads to low demand, which in turn reduces the incentive to produce gender statistics.

WOMEN COUNT RESPONSE:

- **Creating an enabling environment:** In response to these challenges, UN Women developed guidance to integrate gender statistics in National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), in collaboration with PARIS21. Support includes programmatic and technical guidance to pathfinder and non-pathfinder countries to implement gender statistics activities.
- **Increasing data production:** Global monitoring of the SDGs is improving thanks to methodological work and data compilation of gender-related SDG indicators. Partnering with the World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN-Habitat is also generating new data on women's economic empowerment.
- **Improving data accessibility and use:** The Women Count Data Hub launched in 2019 has become a one-stop-shop for gender data. Knowledge products, statistical briefs and research on gender and the SDGs are being produced and widely disseminated. Global advocacy on gender data is also improving through UN Women's participation and organization of major global and regional events.
- **Monitoring, learning and evaluation:** The Mid-Term Review and annual review meetings have provided an opportunity to take stock of progress, lessons learned and to inform the future direction of the programme.

RESULTS

Amid the pandemic, the global project employed several measures to mitigate COVID-19 risks. Support mechanisms for countries and regions went fully virtual; learning on data production and analysis during lockdown measures was made available across all projects; and advocacy instruments such as the existing Women Count Gender Data Hub facilitated dissemination at a large scale. Importantly, the global project responded to the increasing demand for gender data during the pandemic by supporting the implementation of rapid gender assessments (RGAs), providing interregional knowledge exchange, conducting gender statistics assessments, and promoting gender statistics through knowledge products and advocacy events. Key results in 2020 include:

1. Creating an enabling environment

- **Interregional exchange institutionalized cooperation, communication and knowledge-sharing on gender statistics.** Twelve interregional meetings were conducted to facilitate discussions and provide guidance on the implementation of the RGAs, surveys on time use and violence against women, programmatic priorities on gender statistics, and localizing global initiatives such as the Counted and Visible Toolkit. Based on the experiences shared in these meetings, global and regional projects collaborated to design a training programme on time use surveys to respond to the expressed needs of NSOs for capacity-building. Country teams cooperated with national partners to implement 52 RGAs, successfully leading to gender-responsive, COVID-19 emergency response plans, among other things.
- **Eight non-pathfinder countries improved gender statistics environments, including the adoption of RGA methodology in the design of official household surveys.** Technical support was provided to El Salvador, Cambodia and Lesotho to assess gender statistics and develop a detailed strategy. Following gender statistics assessments in 2019, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan and the Maldives developed NSDSs with the support of PARIS21. In two non-pathfinder countries – the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Philippines – UN Women made progress on developing national stand-alone gender statistics projects. In the Philippines, RGA questions were integrated in the 4th quarter 2020 Labour Force Survey and the results of at least two other quarters will cover the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls.

FIGURE 1
Measuring Progress in 2020



Progress was driven by strong technical support to all Women Count projects, including oversight and implementation of the RGAs, SDG monitoring and the launch of the COVID-19 and Gender Monitor.

- **Practical guidance and tools expanded the influence of the Women Count programme in the planning, production and use of gender statistics on COVID-19.** Guidance was produced on conducting RGAs to support regional and country offices and others seeking to measure the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls. It included a reference questionnaire which facilitated 52 countries to successfully implement RGAs, including countries that are not part of Women Count. A guidance on monitoring use cases to capture data use from the RGAs has also been developed, helping to document use cases.
 - **Almost 2,000 people increased their gender statistics capacities through 15 webinars, paving the way for a series of surveys to be implemented.** UN Women's webinar series were organized to foster dialogue on experiences, challenges and lessons learned on the thematic priorities identified by UN Women staff to facilitate the implementation of regional or country projects. Through 154 gender-data-focused webinars, 1,984 participants learned about qualitative data collection for time use surveys, RGAs and Census implementation. The webinar on time use surveys helped to better equip UN Women staff to support national partners implementing time use surveys in Kenya, Senegal, Georgia and elsewhere.
- ### 2. Increasing data production
- **There is now greater availability of data to monitor and report on SDG 5.** Following the reclassification of SDG indicators, 78% of Member States are now monitoring and reporting on SDG 5.5.1b (women's representation in local governments), with 34% of data available for SDG indicators 5.c.1 (proportion of

countries with data on gender-responsive budgeting) and 27% for 5.1.1 (legal frameworks in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex).

- **New gender data on the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 revealed pre-existing inequalities.** During the first year of the pandemic, UN Women supported 52 RGAs, the vast majority of which showed that the COVID-19 pandemic is feeding on pre-existing inequalities and deepening gender-based discrimination and vulnerability. The results of the surveys have informed governments' gender-responsive COVID-19 policies, programmes and/or national strategies in countries such as Albania, Chile, Jordan, Senegal and the Maldives, while shaping UN and UN Women programming to better respond to the crisis.
- **New data were produced on COVID-19 cases by sex and age and women's experience in poverty.** UN Women collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to produce sex-disaggregated data on COVID-19 cases and on the pandemic's economic impacts on women and girls. Findings suggest that a reversal in gains towards eradicating poverty is likely to be observed post-pandemic, with women and girls among the most vulnerable to extreme poverty. These data and recommendations are among the most-cited statistics produced by UN Women and have been used to inform the work of other sister agencies, including the *State of the LDC's Report 2021* – which informs the work of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Committee and updates to the LDCs list.
- **UN Women is increasing the availability of data on the impacts of COVID-19 on violence against women and updating guidelines on the remote collection of such data.** In 2020, UN Women embarked on a project to produce reliable, cross-country and nationally representative data on COVID-19 and violence against women in 14 countries. The objective of the surveys are to measure the impact of COVID-19 on violence against women through specialized, ethically and methodologically sound surveys, increase knowledge on safe, effective and techniques to conduct remote VAW data collection and inform policies and advocacy to address violence against women during the pandemic.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

- **A comprehensive report revealed progress and interruptions on gender equality across all SDGs during the COVID-19 pandemic.** The 2020 edition of *The Gender Snapshot: Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals* showcased the latest available evidence on gender equality across all 17 Goals, underscoring progress made, and progress interrupted, as a result of COVID-19. Women and girls are facing acute hardships, including higher poverty rates, increased care burdens, greater exposure to violence and obstructed access to sexual and reproductive health services. The *Times of India* covered the report's findings on women health-care workers being disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis, prompting the Government to release statistics on infected health-care workers by sex.
- **The Women Count Gender Data Hub is pivotal for global dissemination of gender-related SDG indicators.** In 2020, the Data Hub continued to be recognized within the global gender statistics community. It has been especially crucial in increasing the accessibility of gender data on the SDGs and on the impacts of COVID-19. Through interactive dashboards, the COVID-19 and gender monitor, feature stories, and resource pages, the Data Hub has fomented international dialogue on gender statistics. In 2020, the Hub received 457,593 views from 224 countries and territories – a monumental increase over the 44,400 views in its first three months after launching in 2019.
- **UN Women strengthened global dialogue on gender statistics and intersectionality.**¹ UN Women organized "Counted and Visible: A global conference on the measurement of gender and intersecting inequalities", which brought together over 200 representatives from Member States, UN agencies, CSOs, academia, and NSOs to develop a common understanding of how to measure gender and intersecting inequalities in order to 'leave no one behind'. The conference aimed, among other things, to inform the work of UN Women and the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys on producing disaggregated gender data using existing household surveys to inform policies and advocacy on gender equality and concretely led to the production of the Counted and Visible Toolkit. Learnings from the conference also fed into the Friday Seminar on

¹ The Counted and Visible global conference; the 51st Session of the UNSC; individual attendances at the G20 Civil Society 20 (C20) Summit 2020; and Making Girls Count: Using data to ensure no girl is left behind.

Emerging Issues held during the 51st Session of the UN Statistical Commission. The conference is also informing the current work of UN Women and UNSD on data disaggregation.

- **BBC partnership increased the visibility of data on unpaid care and domestic work during COVID-19.** UN Women partnered on the BBC's 100 Women initiative, which highlighted women's unpaid work in the context of COVID-19 as one of its themes. UN Women also developed a data brief, "[Whose time to care: Unpaid care and domestic work during COVID-19](#)", to share available data from 38 countries that show that while both women's and men's unpaid work burdens increased during the pandemic, women and girls still bore the lion's share. The BBC also used these data for a feature article, "[Coronavirus and gender: More chores for women set back gains in equality](#)", which was translated into 10 languages and shared via social media, reaching an estimated 1 million readers.

- **Partnership with Devex brought gender data closer to key users.** UN Women and Devex partnered to create a [Focus Area on Gender Data](#) to increase coverage and visibility of gender data to an audience of development professionals. Over the course of the partnership, 51 pieces of content were produced; 12 newsletters were sent to 1.4 million people, with an open rate of over 31% (far higher than the average 16–22%); the Focus Area landing page received more than 160,000 visits; and social media outreach – including a Twitter chat on gender data – generated over 8.5 million social media impressions.

4. Monitoring, learning and evaluation

- **Regular reviews of programme effectiveness and strategic guidance improved programme delivery and reporting.** Despite the limitations of COVID-19 restrictions, which led to the cancellation of the annual review meeting, the programme gathered lessons learned through quarterly reviews and monthly interregional meetings. Four virtual quarterly review meetings were held to assess programme progress, generate lessons learned and provide feedback to ensure that deliverables would be met by the end of the year, leading to four quarterly reports and progress highlights shared with the Donor Committee. Monthly interregional meetings have also been held to discuss strategic programme issues, plan capacity-building initiatives, improve data quality and share implementation experiences. In addition to continuously improving the

effectiveness of the programme's strategic interventions, these meetings have been instrumental in mitigating unforeseen risks, especially amid COVID-19.

- **Technical backstopping on results-based management led to a revised results framework of the Women Count programme.** Reduced implementation of activities following COVID-19 restrictions resulted in the need to revise and update the results and resources framework of the programme. Revisions included amending an existing indicator to include COVID-19 RGAs.
- **Taking stock of Phase I and planning for Phase II.** Consultation and review meetings with regional and country projects allowed for assessment of the Women Count programme and informed the preparatory stage for a Phase II. A draft framework for Phase II, including the approach, strategies and priorities envisioned, was presented at the 9th Donor Committee meeting in November 2020. The full programme document will be developed in the third quarter of 2021.

PLANS FOR 2021*

- Developing and implementing a strategy on the role of data as a cross-cutting lever across the Action Coalitions, including organizing sessions to highlight gender data at the Generation Equality Forums in Mexico and Paris;
- Increasing data on SDG 5.a.1 (on gender parity in tenure rights over agricultural land) in partnership with FAO, by utilizing existing household survey data and increasing the number of NSSs that can produce such estimates;
- Preparing guidelines and methodological notes to improve policies, strategies and data collection, including on remote data collection on violence against women
- Drafting and publishing statistical briefs and reports showcasing gender data taken from the 52 RGAs and on violence against women;
- Conducting a training-of-trainers on communicating gender statistics;
- Launching and disseminating the Counted and Visible Toolkit;
- Operational closure of the first phase of the programme and conducting the final evaluation.

* Plans for 2021 may be further adjusted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.