2020

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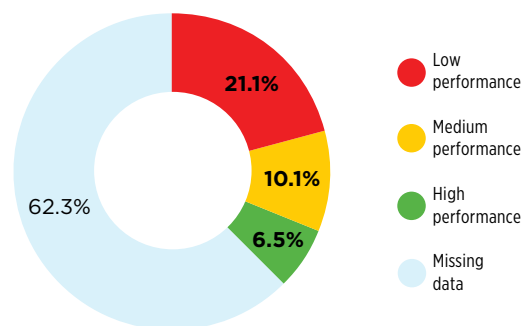IN BRIEF:

MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT IN AFRICA

THE ISSUE

A regional assessment on gender statistics in Africa was conducted in 2018, revealing three interrelated challenges:

• Despite regular censuses and surveys conducted by National Statistical Offices (NSOs), there are huge gaps in data to track gender-related SDG indicators across Africa. Regional stakeholders acknowledge that lack of coordination and poor communication has been a major drawback, leading to duplication of efforts and missed opportunities to leverage resources.

• Technical challenges limit the production of gender statistics and the ability to inform regional and country-level interventions — on economic empowerment, violence against women and girls, political participation, and peace and security.

• NSOs and other producers of statistics are still using outdated or ineffective methods of dissemination and communication, which results in the limited use of gender-sensitive data to influence policy dialogue, planning and budgeting.

FIGURE 1

How is Africa doing on gender data in 2020?

- 21.1% — Low performance
- 10.1% — Medium performance
- 6.5% — High performance
- 62.3% — Missing data

Source: Women Count Data Hub

WOMEN COUNT RESPONSE:

• **Creating an enabling environment:** Regional coordination is being improved. By working with organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African

Development Bank (AfDB), countries are being supported to identify and address institutional, legal and financial constraints to mainstream gender into national statistical systems and establish an efficient monitoring and evaluation system for the SDGs.

- **Increasing data production:** Technical capacities of national statistical systems are being strengthened and quality gender data – on violence against women, unpaid care work, gaps in access to decent work and pay, participation in public life and decision-making, and access to/use of information and communications technologies – are being produced to improve SDG monitoring.

- **Improving data accessibility and use:** The capacities of users are being strengthened to conduct gender data analysis, while the accessibility of gender statistics is increasing through better reporting. Training is also improving capacities to communicate gender data, and data- and metadata-sharing are being encouraged to facilitate data flows, including to regional and global SDG-related databases.

RESULTS

To respond to COVID-19 related challenges, coordination committees were quickly established in 10 countries to support the implementation of rapid gender assessments (RGAs). Surveys were conducted to provide timely data on the impacts of the pandemic across 15 African countries, many of which have fed into UN socioeconomic impact reports and some of which are already shaping government policy responses. UN Women research in 28 countries also paved the way for gender-sensitive solutions to support the COVID-19 recovery. In addition, 2020 was marked by: strengthening relationships to implement Women Count; creating gender steering committees and gender statistics frameworks; fostering South-South cooperation on gender and statistics through the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Community of Practice (COP); improving production and use of gender data; and increasing gender statistics capacities, including through training on gender data communication. Key results include:

1. Creating an enabling environment

- **The _Minimum Set of Gender Indicators for Africa (MSGIA)_ was adopted by the Africa Statistics Commission (ASC) in October 2020, providing strategic direction and scope for gender data actors.**

In partnership with UNECA and AfDB, UN Women supported the finalization and adoption of 53 gender indicators across six domains at the third meeting of the revitalized African Group on Gender Statistics. In setting new gender data priorities and norms, the MSGIA will strengthen the regional collaboration among NSOs. The validated and approved MSGIA was used by NSOs, in collaboration with UN Women and the AfDB, in the preparation of Country Gender Equality Profiles.

- **Newly formed thematic Steering Committees ensured the successful implementation of RGAs in 10 countries.[1]** Building on the learnings of previously established coordination mechanisms, UN Women supported 10 countries in establishing and coordinating committees for the implementation and analysis of RGAs. The thematic Steering Committees ensured that the RGAs were implemented following international data standards. The RGAs results, validated through the Committees, are widely accepted by national governments. The success of the committees proves that multi-stakeholder coordination committees are effective mechanisms to close gaps in gender statistics in the region.

- **A gender-responsive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework and guidelines were produced to strengthen Zimbabwe's gender statistics.** Following the revitalization of Zimbabwe's Gender Statistics Sector Committee as the nodal entity for the coordination of the production and use of gender statistics, UN Women supported the country to establish

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[1] Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Central Africa Republic (CAR), Mali, and Sierra Leone.

an M&E framework and guidelines, which will be used to evaluate the current National Statistics Development Strategy (NSDS) and to incorporate gender data within the upcoming NSDS.

2. Increasing data production

- **Gender data produced in 15 countries[2] informed evidence-based programs and policymaking.** UN Women, in partnership with various UN agencies, donors, international organizations and NSOs,[3] conducted RGAs to address the gender data gap revealed amid the pandemic. Findings from the surveys have fed into several UN Country Teams' (UNCTs) COVID-19 socioeconomic impact assessments. UN Women also developed guidelines to support UN Women staff and gender focal points in UNCTs to ensure that all COVID-19-related assessments are sufficiently gender-responsive, as well as guidelines on using and generating qualitative data during the pandemic. In Rwanda, after the RGA revealed that more women than men have ceased economic activities, the Government expanded an Economic Recovery Fund to cover Small and Medium Enterprises, where women are concentrated, and UN Women also launched a programme to support women business-owners and informal traders.

- **13 non-pathfinder countries improved their gender statistics production.** The focus in 2020 was on producing and analyzing data, and generating reports on the gendered impact of COVID-19 in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

- **More gender data are available for SDG monitoring.** The production and availability of gender data are crucial to assess and address gender-based challenges. UN Women provided technical support to Kenya to conduct a time use survey and to Rwanda and South Africa to conduct surveys on violence against women. The new data generated provided insights into gendered patterns of behavior, which are being used to inform intersectional and inclusive policymaking. UN Women further assessed the availability of sex-disaggregated COVID-19 prevalence and mortality data in the region and held discussions with the Centre of Disease Control for Africa to discuss possible strategies to overcome the gaps.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

- **UN Women research paved the way for gender-sensitive solutions to build back better in COVID-19 recovery.** UN Women, in partnership with UNFPA, produced a 28-country study in Eastern and Southern Africa that revealed opportunities and constraints for gender equality in post-COVID-19 recovery. It includes the findings of the RGAs conducted in the region as well as concrete recommendations for advancing gender equality and for shaping policies and programmes in the COVID-19- and post-pandemic era. The launch event was attended by nearly 200 participants from 98 countries. A harmonized ESA regional RGA database and report highlighting the expected impacts of the pandemic on achieving the SDGs was also produced. The findings suggest that COVID-19 deepened poverty and vulnerability for both women and men and heightened gender inequality. Furthermore, the original trajectory towards achieving gender equality by 2030 was significantly disrupted by the pandemic as well as the re-prioritization of resources during the mitigation of its impact. UN Women was invited to present some of the findings of this study at a conference on 'Development challenges in Africa in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic' jointly hosted by UNU-WIDER and UONGOZI Institute, at a session on the implications of the pandemic for livelihoods and welfare.

- **South-South cooperation on gender data and statistics was strengthened through the creation of an inter-agency exchange forum among data producers and users.** A Community of Practice (COP) on Data and Statistics was founded in Eastern and Southern Africa to create an enabling environment for learning and coordination around gender data and statistics. In three meetings, the COP discussed and finalized the MSGIA. Attended by NSO representatives, Ministries of Women, regional bodies and UN agencies, the COP is a formal forum for user-producer dialogues to foster South-South learning and expand the knowledge base on gender statistics best practices in East and Southern Africa.

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[2] Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda, Malawi, Cameroon, Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast Ivoire, CAR, Mali, and Sierra Leone

[3] UN Human Rights, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, Irish Aid, Sida, Oxfam, and CARE

- **More than 200 data producers and users from 28 African countries are applying new knowledge on communicating gender data to improve dissemination of data products.** In regional training sessions on gender statistics communication, more than 200 data users from 28 African countries increased knowledge on the adoption and use of improved communication and visualization techniques, aimed at improving the outreach of COVID-19 RGA findings in Africa. This includes one training co-organized by UN Women, UNECA, and the AfDB in October-November. All training sessions imparted gender data communication and visualization techniques, which have since been used in the dissemination of Kenya's RGA, for the launch of the Zanzibar Gender Indicator Report, and in Uganda's revised National Priority Gender Equality Indicators report, with easy-to-understand results illustrated through infographics and targeted messaging.

PLANS FOR 2021*

- Completing assessments of the gender statistics systems in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Sudan and South Sudan;

- Finalizing and publish the reports from remaining countries who conducted the first round of RGAs,

and developing a policy brief in partnership with UNFPA on gender-based violence during COVID-19 in ESA based on analysis of RGA data;

- Conducting RGAs, in collaboration with UNICEF and SIDA, in Benin, DRC, Niger and Togo;

- Developing training materials on methodology and implementation of time use surveys through a continent-wide online training;

- Conducting an evaluation of the Africa Programme of Gender Statistics (2017-2021) and develop a new programme for 2022-2025, in partnership with UNECA and AfDB;

- Harmonizing the gender statistics training materials developed for the Asia-Pacific region with materials from UNECA;

- Developing a gender data and statistics information system for ESA;

- Publishing two research reports, one on the determinants of youth not in employment, education and training in ESA, and one on gender and urban public transport in two East African cities.

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* Plans for 2021 may be further adjusted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.