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IN BRIEF:

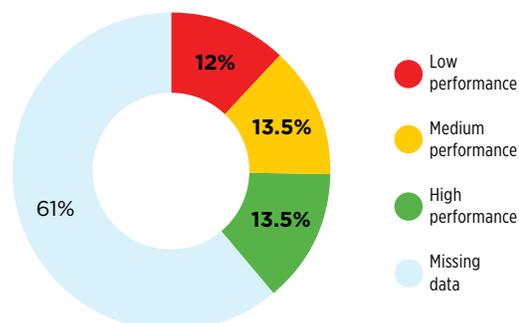
MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

THE ISSUE

A regional assessment on gender statistics in Asia-Pacific, conducted in 2018, revealed three interrelated 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

FIGURE 1
How is the Pacific doing on gender data in 2020?

Source: [Women Count Data Hub](#)

statistics to inform decisions, research, advocacy, policies and programmes.

WOMEN COUNT RESPONSE:

- **Creating an enabling environment:** Regional coordination is being improved. By working with organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Island Countries are being supported to mainstream gender in national plans through the Roadmap on Gender Statistics.
- **Increasing data production:** The technical capacities of national statistical systems are being strengthened and quality data are being generated on the gender and environment nexus, climate change and women's land ownership. This aims to improve SDG monitoring and leave no one behind.
- **Improving data accessibility and use:** Training on gender statistics is being standardized across the region. Through work with the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), users' capacities 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, while data- and metadata-sharing are being encouraged to facilitate data flows, including between regional and global SDG-related databases.

RESULTS

To respond to COVID-19-related challenges, RGAs were undertaken in 11 countries and Big Data analysis have guided countries in addressing gender gaps in their emergency responses to COVID-19. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States were supported to reprocess data to monitor progress on gender equality; the regional project digitalized training modules to produce e-learning modules to complement the Gender Statistics Training Curriculum and enable remote learning, and user-producer dialogues have enhanced data availability and use for gender-responsive policymaking. Key results in 2020 include:

1. Creating an enabling environment

- **Gender statistics became a key area of work for the ESCAP Committee on Statistics.** As a result of UN Women's advocacy, technical support and partnership, in 2020, the Committee on Statistics agreed to mainstream gender across all of its workstreams. As a result of this decision, UN Women, in collaboration with ESCAP, has been enhancing gender mainstreaming in disaster statistics, economic statistics and civil registration and vital statistics

FIGURE 2
Measuring Progress in 2020



Progress was made in Asia and the Pacific as a result of influencing the work for the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, newly established steering groups in Pacific Island countries, data production on gendered COVID-19 impacts, and the publication of the ASEAN Gender Outlook.

(CRVS). In the area of environment and disaster statistics, UN Women and its partners (International Union for Conservation of Nature, ESCAP, Food And Agriculture Organization, and UN Environment Programme) have developed indicators and a model questionnaire, that will be field-tested in Bangladesh and Mongolia in 2021. This will significantly increase the availability and quality of data on gender and the environment, an area with traditionally low gender analysis. Further, a dedicated gender session has been included in the upcoming Asia-Pacific Inter-ministerial Conference on CRVS and a decision to promote women's registration of lifecycle events is expected to be adopted by attending ministers.

- **Newly established gender statistics steering groups enabled Pacific Island Countries to prioritize gender data in national strategies.** Continuing the Pacific Roadmap implementation, four Pacific Island countries (Palau, Tonga, Fiji and Micronesia) have created national coordination mechanisms and gender statistics plans informed by Roadmap guidelines. A Pacific Gender Statistics Coordination Group is also being established together with SPC and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which will support countries further in this endeavor. Utilizing the Pacific Roadmap, Tonga set up a Gender Statistics Taskforce and promoted inter-ministerial dialogue to identify key areas for gender production (women's leadership, gender and environment). Palau used the Pacific Roadmap to identify 40 NPGEIs as a first step towards a centralized gender data repository and with UN Women's support is reprocessing existing SDG data and include a time

use module in the upcoming Household, Income and Expenditure Surveys 2021. These efforts will be reinforced through a Pacific Statistics Coordination Group, a sub-regional platform for exchange on Pacific Roadmap implementation, which will be created in 2021.

- **At least 21 countries were supported to strengthen gender statistics.** In Viet Nam, UN Women supported the generation of estimates for the new National Priority Gender Equality Indicators (NPGEIs) and microdata reprocessing to drive the periodic *Women and Men in Viet Nam* report – a publication that is widely consulted by policymakers. In the Philippines, support was provided to design a Gender and Development database, which will collate all gender-related data into a central repository that the Philippine Commission for Women and other policymakers can use to inform policy decisions.

2. Increasing data production

- **RGAs conducted in 11 countries¹ strengthened evidence-based emergency responses to COVID-19.** The pandemic increased gender data demands across sectors, such as employment and food security, to inform evidence-based responses to the crisis. As a result, UN Women rolled out **RGAs** in 11 countries in Asia and the Pacific shortly after the pandemic began. Based on the **study's** results, the Maldives, for example, extended their COVID-19 Income Support Allowance to informal workers. RGA data were also used by the Ministry of Women in Indonesia to influence the work of the national COVID-19 taskforce and to request that additional funds be allocated to targeted support for women.
- **Regular sample surveys were supported despite COVID-19 related challenges.** In Mongolia, UN Women supported the NSO for the collection of data on (1) Women's Herders, through the livestock census, and (2) gender and the environment, through a stand-alone survey using the Model Questionnaire developed by UN Women and partners. In Bangladesh, UN Women also supported the design, training and implementation of the country's first time use survey as well as the testing of the Model Questionnaire on gender and the environment in 4 selected provinces.

- **The Asia-Pacific Training Curriculum on Gender Statistics was implemented across the region, and beyond.** The curriculum, developed by UN Women and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) under the Subgroup on Gender Statistics Training, was implemented in states and Universities in 10 countries in 2020.² Nearly 300 students and statisticians from 11 universities and statistical institutions increased their knowledge on gender data production and use through a virtual training of trainers. These institutions have created gender statistics programmes, and regularly provide related training to students and statisticians. For example, based on the Training Curriculum materials, the National University of Mongolia developed a post-graduate course on Gender and Economics, to be rolled out in Spring 2021. Following this interest and to ensure a pandemic-friendly learning environment, UN Women, SIAP and ESCAP have created e-learning materials for a virtual gender statistics training that will be launched in 2021. This will be complemented by a training certification system, the first of its kind for SIAP. UN Women will also maintain a repository of training experts, to support the easier mobilization of gender data experts.
- **Countries reprocessed existing data to reveal gaps and improve measurement.** Reprocessing existing data can yield diverse gender data for policymaking and SDG monitoring. In Afghanistan, UN Women supported the reprocessing of time-use survey data, which revealed large gender gaps and capacity-building needs on survey methodologies. In Mongolia, 60 statisticians benefitted from a training on reprocessing data led by the National Statistics Office (NSO) to conduct 4 trainings in 4 provinces, with the aim to effectively disseminate knowledge about producing multiple disaggregated estimates. As a result, more than 5 broad indicators³ were generated that will support the country's commitment to improving women's well-being.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

- **The new *ASEAN Gender Outlook* was published, promoting gender mainstreaming in national and regional strategies.** In partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), the ASEAN Committee on

¹ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Thailand.

² Kyrgyzstan, Philippines, SESRIC (sub-regional), Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Central African Republic, Germany

³ Access to clean fuels, water, sanitation, child marriage, skilled attendance

Women, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, and NSOs across the region, UN Women has supported all 10 ASEAN Member States to reprocess existing data, disaggregate it at multiple levels, and identify the population groups lagging the furthest behind for each of the SDG goals from a gender perspective. This data was then published in the first edition of the biannual ASEAN flagship publication on gender equality. UN Women has also been working with all 10 Member States to promote the use of the data to formulate strategic policies and decisions in line with the findings of the publication. ASEC is already using the report's findings for future regional strategies, such as the implementation of ASEAN's Complementarity Initiative and ASEAN Cares. Key messages are also being disseminated to civil society and academia in partnership with the ACSDS, in Mahidol University, in Thailand, to ensure the prioritization of gender data for tracking progress towards gender equality and achieving the SDGs.

- **Big Data analysis empowered women in micro and small businesses during COVID-19.** In partnership with Pulse Lab and Gojek, UN Women produced the report *Leveraging digitalization to cope with COVID-19* and launched a [data visualization tool](#) using Big Data and qualitative and quantitative data on women's participation in the digital economy. The data was used by the Indonesian Government to promote women's access to finance, including advocating for cash-support stimulus packages for small businesses.
- **Service-providers improved outreach to reduce violence against women during COVID-19.** UN Women, in partnership with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), International Labor Organization (ILO) and Quilt.ai, produced a [Big Data analysis](#) on social media posts and online searches for support services for violence against women and girls in eight countries⁴ during the pandemic. The analysis also assessed their success in locating necessary services

and results were imparted through a training to help service-providers, such as civil society organizations, helplines, and emergency service providers for victims of violence, to better reach survivors by using targeted messages and greater engagement with online users.

- To promote data use, [interactive infographics were designed](#), [op-eds were produced](#), [data stories were posted](#), [articles were published in news outlets](#) and [UN Women participated and presented findings in numerous events](#) organized by partners. [Videos](#) were also created to disseminate findings.

PLANS FOR 2021*

- Continuing implementing the Roadmap on Gender Statistics;
- Providing technical support to countries for the implementation of the ASEAN Gender Outlook;
- Supporting countries in the implementation and analysis of specialized surveys, such as the Bangladesh time use and gender-environment surveys;
- Rolling out a second round of surveys on the medium-term impacts of COVID-19 in eight countries,⁵ in partnership with the Asian Development Bank;
- Organizing targeted training on utilizing big data for Pacific Island Countries, in partnership with SPC and SIAP;
- Continue implementing the Training Curriculum on Statistics and roll out its e-learning module;
- Publishing two briefs, one, regarding registration of births, deaths and civil events in times of humanitarian crises, one regarding the connections between climate change and gender inequalities;
- Continue organizing user-producer dialogues to improve gender data dissemination and use.

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

⁴ India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.

⁵ Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Nepal, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Kiribati.