PHASE 1

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IN BRIEF:

MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

THE ISSUE

A regional assessment on gender statistics, conducted in 2017 in Europe and Central Asia (ECA), revealed three interrelated challenges:

- The low priority given to gender data within national statistical systems (NSSs) was evident in organizational structures, budget allocation, and the absence of a strong commitment to gender monitoring and reporting in national statistical strategies and plans. A weak policy space, limited resources and a lack of coordination meant gender statistics were not adequately mainstreamed in statistical production.

- Technical challenges limited the effective and efficient production of gender statistics. Although data production was relatively strong in the ECA region, ongoing issues related to data sensitivity and transparency resulted in gender data either not being collected or not being released.

- Ineffective use of gender statistics was the most problematic issue in the region. The demand for support to improve dissemination, communication and use of data seemed to outweigh the supply of funding and technical assistance.

WOMEN COUNT RESPONSE:

- **Creating an enabling environment:** Regional coordination on SDG monitoring has improved as a result of strengthening UN Women's collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Regional UN Coordination Group on Data and Statistics. Countries are being supported to identify and address institutional, legal and financial constraints to gender mainstreaming in their NSSs and to establish an efficient system for monitoring and evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- **Increasing data production:** The technical capacities of NSSs have been strengthened to produce quality data on violence against women and unpaid care work and have resulted in improved SDG monitoring.

- **Improving data accessibility and use:** The capacities of users have been strengthened through training on how to analyse gender data and improve how gender data are produced and communicated. Gender statistics are now more accessible to all users through increased analysis in knowledge products and data portals, which has resulted in better reporting on progress on gender equality across the region.

"During the last several years, important projects were implemented with the technical and financial support of UN Women, with a very successful and productive partnership. Strengthening gender statistics has utmost importance for Geostat and every single step that is taken with this regard, is highly appreciated. Significant progress was made regarding filling gender data gaps and … Geostat had tangible results regarding improving access and use of data."

Gogita Todradze, Executive Director, GEOSTAT

KEY RESULTS

Since 2017, the Women Count programme in ECA has been instrumental in strengthening regional coordination to produce and use gender data for SDG monitoring. Key results during include:

1. Creating an enabling environment

- **Improved coherence and system-wide action on gender data have enabled more countries to better monitor the SDGs from a gender perspective.** Since 2018, UN Women's engagement within the UN Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics[1] has contributed significantly to: peer learning and improved regional coordination, identifying synergies with UN agencies on SDG data work, and the co-authoring of annual reports on progress on the SDGs, resulting in gender statistics being more intentionally integrated in country-level UN support. As a member of UNECE Steering Groups on Gender Statistics and Statistics for SDGs, UN Women developed guidance for data producers on measuring the ongoing and longer-term gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including methodological considerations for data collection using a minimum set of questions to integrate within household and population-based surveys. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Bureau has proposed that CES countries incorporate questions from the guidance within their regular statistical data collection. This will substantially support National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to generate data for developing gender-responsive policies, while contributing to broader understanding of the gender-specific impacts of COVID-19.

- **Gender data are now mainstreamed in national strategies, resulting in stronger capacities to govern, produce and report on gender data commitments.** UN Women has been supporting six countries[2] across the region to mainstream gender in national statistical development strategies (NSDSs), to develop dedicated gender statistics plans and inform gender strategies. Tajikistan's NSDS featured a dedicated chapter on gender statistics for the first time, with specific objectives to be achieved. Georgia adopted its first-ever 2021–2023 Strategy on Gender Statistics to: enhance its 2020–2023 NSDS; address the increased demand for high-quality and timely gender statistics; strengthen the coordination and financing mechanism for gender statistics; improve access and dissemination; and boost the use of data for evidence-driven action and policymaking. Findings from national assessments on gender statistics in Kyrgyzstan and Armenia will also be used develop their first-ever National Strategies on Gender Statistics in 2023, to set the strategic direction for gender statistics in these countries, including priorities for strengthening the coordination, production and use of gender data. Moreover, Kyrgyzstan has further used the findings to formulate a dedicated target on the harmonization and alignment of gender statistics with international recommendations and requirements as part of the country's new Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2024), to be approved by the Government in 2022.

2. Increasing data production

- **Countries have delivered on their commitment to improve SDG monitoring by collecting more and better data.** With UN Women's support to conduct surveys and reprocess existing data, six NSOs[3] have

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1 Replaced the former Issue-based Coalition on Data for the SDGs (IBC-SDG Data) in 2020.
2 Gender has been mainstreamed in the NSDSs of Albania, Georgia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with Kyrgyzstan's to be approved in 2022. Dedicated gender statistics plans have also been developed in Georgia, with work ongoing in Kyrgyzstan and Armenia.
3 Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), and Kyrgyzstan.

increased the availability of SDG gender-related indicators through the production and reprocessing of available data. In 2019, NSOs across the region pledged greater cooperation to improve SDG monitoring. And national capacity to produce gender-related SDG indicators now ranges from 50% in Tajikistan to 70% in Kazakhstan, showing that countries are delivering on their commitments. In 2021, at least two countries (Albania and Georgia) started producing new indicators to inform their 'Leaving no one behind' national policy agenda. Albania produced eight new national priority gender equality indicators (NPGEIs) for the first time as part of the annual statistical publication Women and Men in Albania, 2020 edition. The indicators will feed into national reporting on the SDGs and data-driven policies on gender equality and women's empowerment, and have already informed the targets and responsibilities of new national gender equality strategies in both Albania and Kyrgyzstan. Additionally, UN Women supported Georgia and Kyrgyzstan to generate more disaggregated gender statistics by reprocessing existing data, such as from Household Budget Surveys and Labour Force Surveys, to feed SDG reporting and monitoring of national gender equality commitments. For example, in Georgia, new employment indicators were included in its Country Gender Equality Profile, and Kyrgyzstan Women and Men 2021 has at least 10 new indicators.

- **Data producers' and users' statistical literacy has improved to fill critical data gaps on unpaid care work and violence against women (VAW).** Since 2018, UN Women has led regional and national capacity-building efforts for data producers and users, which has resulted in strengthened national capacities to produce time-use statistics on unpaid domestic and care work and enhance monitoring and reporting of relevant SDG indicators. Trained statisticians in Georgia and Armenia applied the skills to design their first-ever time-use surveys, which have allowed them to report on implementation of SDG 5.4. They are also expected to be used to design data-driven policies and programmes on the care economy.[4] In Kazakhstan, as a result of UN Women technical coaching sessions on conducting the VAW prevalence survey, the National Statistics Committee redesigned survey methodology and tools to enable them to provide updated information on intimate partner violence and for the first time will capture data on new forms of non-partner violence, including sexual harassment (piloted and to be launched in 2022). In Kyrgyzstan, through UN Women's partnership with the American University in Central Asia and the School of Data, a training module on communicating gender statistics, build partially on the SIAP training module, is now institutionalized as part of the AUCA's Gender and Media master course is increasing gender data literacy and improve practical skills among media students to compile, analyse and present media products using gender statistics.

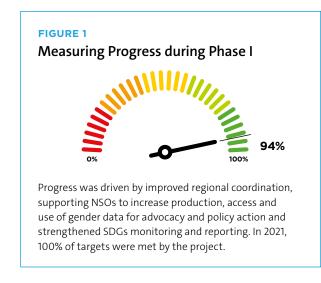### 3. Improving data accessibility and use

- **Gender data have been used to fuel policy action on preventing violence against women and on women's employment in the context COVID-19.** In Georgia and Albania, VAW data equipped advocates with the needed evidence to call for legal changes, resulting in the adoption of new legislation preventing sexual harassment and amendments to the Criminal Code to recognize psychological violence and dating violence as forms of gender-based violence, as well as to improve service-delivery for survivors. Findings from the rapid gender assessments (RGAs) have been incorporated into COVID-19 national response and recovery plans in several countries, and were used to mobilize additional resources to mainstream gender into recovery projects and programmes in Georgia and Ukraine. The findings were also used to analyse the government's COVID-19 responses and budget revisions from a gender perspective. In Albania, the RGA findings and advocacy also supported discussions with Parliament and line ministries that increased the target of women beneficiaries for government subsidies and support packages – particularly to specifically reach self-employed women farmers, job-seekers and women-led small businesses – by 15%.

- **Increasing access and improving how gender data are disseminated has fuelled advocacy and action on gender equality.** In Belarus, a one-stop-shop gender data portal has enabled the Government to access the latest gender-related indicators to measure progress on the implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2021–2025). In Georgia, Datathons were organized, which produced innovative visual communication products

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4 Armenia's TUS was launched in 2022 and Georgia's TUS was launched in 2020, with preliminary results to be available in 2022.

on gender statistics that have been widely used for advocacy and outreach on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 on women's and men's lives. Tajikistan produced a press release and infographics based on their Women and Men publication for International Women's Day. Meanwhile, in Kyrgyzstan, graduate students of the Gender and Media Master's programme published four human data stories illustrating specific gender issues by combining data with a compelling narrative. The gender data quiz on women's and men's situation was published by two national online media outlets with the highest outreach in the country. The regional data-driven snapshot Keep the promise, accelerate the change has also been used as a reference for activists, policymakers and other decision-makers to fuel advocacy efforts to drive change 25 years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action.

PLANS FOR PHASE II[5]

Phase II of the Women Count ECA Regional Project will aim to enhance and sustain national and regional efforts to build gender-sensitive NSSs by further mainstreaming gender in NSDSs and scaling-up data collection on time-use and VAW, while harnessing the potential of non-official data sources to fill knowledge gaps on gender equality. It will continue capacity-building to foster knowledge-sharing and best practices across countries and to enhance the statistical literacy and ability of data users and producers to use gender data to inform advocacy and influence policymaking. Specific interventions will include:

Measuring Progress during Phase I

94%

0%   100%

Progress was driven by improved regional coordination, supporting NSOs to increase production, access and use of gender data for advocacy and policy action and strengthened SDGs monitoring and reporting. In 2021, 100% of targets were met by the project.

- Strengthening regional collaboration on gender data by expanding partnerships with UNECE and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and advancing methodological work on filling gender data gaps.

- Supporting countries to assess, mainstream and develop their NSDSs or national action plans.

- Supporting countries to conduct gender-related surveys to strengthen the national and regional capacity to monitor and report on SDG progress, including through the development of practical tools and guidelines to facilitate survey planning.

- Building capacity on the use of administrative data and non-traditional data sources for the production and use of gender statistics.

- Advancing existing work to increase data accessibility and use through knowledge products and data portals.

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5 *Plans for Phase II may be further adjusted.