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IN BRIEF

WOMEN COUNT PHASE II

ARAB STATES

The issue

Similar to other regions, the Arab States face several gender statistics challenges including:

- The need for stronger political will to step up the collection and dissemination of gender indicators in data collection and production processes in all national statistical systems (NSSs).

- Data on gender disparities are of common interest in the Arab States, but comprehensive gender statistics are not available for many economic and social issues in all countries, making it difficult to measure progress towards gender-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets.

- There is a strong regional need for further analysis of data on women's economic empowerment (WEE), violence against women (VAW), and women in peace, security and humanitarian action (WPS/HA). However, the lack of legal frameworks and policies on the production of gender statistics, coupled with limited awareness of their importance for gender equality, pose major challenges.

Our response

The Women Count regional programme for the Arab States began in mid-2023, aiming to:

- **Create an enabling environment**: Support countries in conducting assessments on the status of gender statistics; develop national statistical development strategies (NSDSs) and plans; provide capacity-building support; improve legal and institutional arrangements for the production and use of gender statistics; adapt UN Women's gender statistics training modules to the Arab States' context; and strengthen regional partnerships to produce knowledge products and build capacities.

- **Increase data production**: Support data collection in key areas, like VAW, WEE and women's time use; develop methodological standards for measuring technology-facilitated violence against women (TF VAW); strengthen the capacity of data producers; and collaborate with various organizations to analyse femicide data and monitor and report on regional progress towards the (SDGs).

- **Improve data accessibility and use**: Create knowledge products, including reports and data visualizations, to highlight key findings from data-collection exercises and disseminate these through multiple channels to increase awareness; enhance the capacity of media outlets to use gender data for policy formulation and advocacy; create a regional forum to link data production and use, facilitating exchange between data producers and decision-makers; and prepare a communications strategy for the programme.

Where we work

6 **Countries**
Bahrain, Iraq, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and other countries, as demands emerge.

Thematic priorities

Humanitarian action: Produce data on the various impacts of the war in Gaza, **Palestine**, on women and girls, to inform the humanitarian response.

Economic empowerment: Review women's labour force participation and employment rates in Saudi Arabia, in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO). Provide technical support to UN Women in **Morocco**, a stand-alone country since Phase I, in particular on the planned Time-Use Survey (TUS).

Violence against women: Support the Governments of Iraq and Palestine, which have expressed interest in assessments of their gender data production and use, to include a domestic violence module in their planned Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS), in partnership with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); analyse femicide data, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); and contribute to developing methodological standards for measuring TF VAW, with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Results 2023
Creating an enabling environment

- **Statisticians from nine National Statistical Offices (NSOs) across the region shared their experiences and increased their knowledge of time-use surveys, with some now planning surveys**. In 2023, 17 statisticians from nine NSOs from the Arab States region[1] increased their knowledge on the methodology and uses of time-use surveys at a Regional Workshop on Time-Use Statistics in October 2023, organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and UN Women. The workshop encouraged interactive dialogue and sharing of national experiences and good practices in collecting and producing time-use statistics in the region, including challenges, queries and concerns. UN Women led a session on measuring supervisory care at the workshop. Participants from **Morocco** expressed that the knowledge and skills gained will help them to plan and undertake a stand-alone time-use survey in 2025. Other NSOs, including **Jordan** and **Egypt**, expressed interest in undertaking stand-alone or module-based time-use surveys incorporated in labour force surveys.

- **Tunisia was supported to produce its second NSDS, which now has a gender perspective**. UN Women provided technical and advocacy support to the National Council for Statistics (CNS) of **Tunisia** for the development of its second National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2024–2026 (following its NSDS for 2016–2020). Women Count advocacy helped to integrate a gender perspective into the NSDS, with the ultimate goal of availing gender data to influence policy, programmes and advocacy. The final draft of the new NSDS awaits approval by the Government to pave the way for implementation.

- **New UN partnerships are poised to produce new regional data on gender equality in the judiciary and develop methodological notes on how to measure TF VAW.** A partnership with UNODC was initiated to co-produce a report on gender equality in the judiciary in the Arab States region, with the workplan and methodology agreed upon in 2023. This partnership seeks to strengthen regional efforts to generate new data and analysis and coordinate with key national stakeholders, such as Ministries of Justice and improve coordination within the UN system on areas of common interest in gender statistics production, thereby reducing duplication and increasing cost-effectiveness. The data on women's representation in the justice sector will facilitate advocacy for increased women's participation therein. In addition, UN Women has been working with UNFPA and WHO to

develop methodological notes on how to measure technology-facilitated violence against women and girls in the Arab States region, with a virtual discussion held in 2023 between UN Women in partnership with UNFPA and WHO. Additional UN agencies are to be engaged, such as ESCWA. This UN partnership aims to put in place a clear methodology on TF VAW (new area) considering the region's context that will facilitate the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of data to inform policy, programmes and advocacy for interventions to combat and eliminate TF VAW.

Increasing data production

- **A newly produced** [Handbook on the Arab Gender Indicator Framework](#) **aims to enhance SDG monitoring**. To support countries to produce and disseminate comparable gender indicators to forge common understanding on quantitative monitoring and reporting on the SDGs and other key development indicators, this 2023 handbook highlights the need for gender-sensitive measurements in Arab countries, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its core objective of "leaving no one behind". The handbook features 115 indicators covering priority areas in the Arab region linked to the strategic objectives outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action. It also assesses data availability and metadata resources to produce and disseminate comparable official statistics. UN Women supported ESCWA with a technical review of the handbook, which will serve as a key guide for statisticians and policymakers to strengthen regional efforts to produce and use gender data. This cooperation with ESCWA also led to joint planning and co-production of the *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab States: Gender Snapshot 2024.*

- **The first concrete data about online VAW in Libya, collected using big data, have been disseminated and are being used in advocacy**. The ["Using Big Data Analytics for Insights on Online Violence Against Women in Libya"](#) study, published in May 2023, provides the first sampling of data around online violence against women in Libya in order to better understand this form of gender-based violence. The data were used for advocacy in different forums to raise awareness on TF VAW at the regional level, including at the African Gender Statistics Forum in Morocco in November 2023.

Improving data use

- **Data on the gendered impacts of the conflict in Palestine are informing UN Women's humanitarian response**. At least 14,716 female-headed households have received urgent humanitarian assistance after data on the gendered impacts of the conflict were produced and used to develop [UN Women's 6-month humanitarian response](#). In response to the escalation of hostilities in Palestine, the Women Count regional programme produced a [Rapid Assessment and Humanitarian Response in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), published in October 2023, providing a preliminary analysis of the conflict's gender impacts and highlighting the estimated number of female-headed households as well as internally displaced women. Data from the assessment have received significant media coverage and continue to be widely used by other humanitarian partners. The Women Count programme played a crucial technical and financing role in generating relevant data/estimates to facilitate the humanitarian response. In addition, a [Gender Alert: The Gendered Impact of the Crisis in Gaza](#) was developed in 2023 and published in January 2024, providing an overview of the situation in Gaza and articulating UN Women's work under its six-month multisectoral response to the crisis.

- **Regional indicators on WEE and women's political empowerment are now available through a regional portal**. In March 2023, UN Women launched [GenTRACK](#), an advanced digital platform for monitoring and advancing gender equality and women's rights in the Arab States region. It provides a comprehensive perspective on the status of women and girls, with 194 gender indicators organized into four thematic areas and eight sub-themes. With data on 17 countries and territories, from 2000–2022, the platform serves to support decision-making by diverse stakeholders, including governmental officials, policymakers, development specialists, academia and civil society organizations (CSOs). GenTRACK allows multiple data-visualization options, including maps, charts, tables and country snapshots, making it a valuable resource for stakeholders to monitor and advocate for women's rights. GenTRACK was developed based on inputs and data contributions from various international organizations, with critical roles played by UN Women, the ILO, ESCWA and the World Bank. The platform will allow CSOs and other advocates to leverage data to as evidence for their advocacy efforts to influence policy changes at both national and international levels.

Plans for 2024

1. **Creating an enabling environment**: Support the development of an action plan on gender statistics for Tunisia's NSDS for 2024–2026; advocate for and produce assessments of the status of gender statistics in Bahrain, Palestine and Saudi Arabia; and build stakeholder capacities on gender-related SDG indicators in Bahrain, as requested by the Government.

2. **Increasing data production**: Support the inclusion of a module on domestic violence in the MICS survey in Palestine; continue to produce data on the ongoing situation in Gaza; finalize *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab States: The Gender Snapshot* in partnership with ESCWA; and produce a study on female representation in the justice sector in the region.

3. **Improving data accessibility and use**: Develop a second phase of the GenTRACK indicators; organize regional Community of Practice events; disseminate key findings of the study on female representation in the justice sector, in partnership with UNODC.

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1   Namely Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Syria, Somalia, Tunisia and Yemen.