



Photo: UN Women/Montira Narkvichien

## WOMEN COUNT PHASE II

# ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

### The issue

Since 2019, Women Count has supported countries in the Asia-Pacific region to produce and use quality gender data. Nonetheless, gaps remain in areas of key policy relevance, including:

- Data to inform gender-sensitive environmental policies are very scarce, yet crucial, considering the region's extreme vulnerability to disasters, the devastating consequences of climate change, and the disproportionate dependence of women on climate-sensitive sectors as a main source of income.
- Similarly, data on women's participation in care work, both paid and unpaid, are critical for women's economic empowerment (WEE), yet still not available in every country. This dearth became even more palpable amid the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple climate-related hazards that have worsened women's burdens.
- Given the region's high Internet and mobile phone penetration, there is enormous potential for the use of non-conventional data sources to fill important data gaps. Despite countries' interest, there is a dearth of capacity to produce gender statistics using sources such as big data.
- The use of data for evidence-based decision-making is still not consistent across the region. Investments are needed to enhance access, understanding and the capacity of policymakers to use gender statistics.

### Our response

To address these remaining issues, in phase II, Women Count will seek to:

- **Create an enabling environment:** Support the mainstreaming of gender statistics across all workstreams of the Asia-Pacific Committee on Statistics; strengthen subregional coordination mechanisms in the Pacific, in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Secretariat; and bolster the capacities of data users and producers, together with the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and the Centre of Excellence on Gender Equality (COE).
- **Increase data production:** Support national statistical offices (NSOs) to develop and implement new gender and the environment surveys (GES); support NSOs to use non-conventional sources to fill gender data gaps; reprocess data to generate Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) estimates disaggregated at multiple levels; and produce time-use data and measure the value of care work, including through national accounting systems.
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** Provide technical and financial support to countries to improve the regular dissemination and communication of gender statistics through demand-driven and user-friendly publications and tools; disseminate timely evidence and knowledge on relevant topics through thematic reports and interactive tools following surveys or data reprocessing exercises; promote data use for policy design and monitoring, including to track national efforts towards global commitments, such as the SDGs and the many environmental conventions.

## Where we work



# 26 Countries

Two subregions: the Pacific (covering 14 Pacific Island countries with a special focus on Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga), and Southeast Asia (covering 11 countries, with a focus on Cambodia), in addition to a full country project in Bangladesh.

## Thematic priorities



**Gender and environment:** Increase the availability, quality and utilization of statistics on gender and the environment by supporting countries to conduct specialized surveys, use non-conventional data sources, including geospatial information systems (GIS) and big data to fill data gaps, and collaborate with data users and producers to inform environmental decision-making and monitoring of environmental commitments.



**Economic empowerment:** Support the collection of data on time-use and measurement of care and engage with national statisticians and relevant line ministries to promote their use and inform national accounting.



**Innovation:** Increase collaboration with existing experts and networks while building the capacity of the region to leverage innovative non-traditional data sources to fill other gender data gaps.

which has increased the availability of gender data on the environment and time use. This endorsement by the most senior officials responsible for the production and use of statistics at national levels, will further strengthen the commitment to harmonize the production and use of gender statistics in more Pacific Island countries.

- **ASEAN established its first coordination mechanism for gender statistics, enabling the gender-responsive monitoring of national, regional and global commitments.** The “ASEAN South-South and Triangular Cooperation Group on Gender Statistics for Tracking Progress towards the SDGs and Beyond” was established in late 2023 through UN Women’s partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat. The group convenes representatives from NSOs and policymakers across Member States. Through technical collaboration, knowledge-sharing and establishing joint priorities, this mechanism aims to accelerate gender data production and use and enable a gender-responsive implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and monitoring of the SDGs and other frameworks (e.g., Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Kunming-Montreal Framework, etc.). As co-chair, UN Women will support the coordination and implementation of the group’s forthcoming workplan based on joint priorities.
- **UN Women’s efforts in Asia and the Pacific are helping to define global standards on mainstreaming gender across climate change and environment statistics.** Harnessing its expertise and experience in developing a methodology to better measure the gender-environment nexus, including through dedicated surveys and the [Asia-Pacific Set of Gender-Environment Indicators](#), UN Women contributed to the efforts of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) and Expert Group on Environment Statistics (EGES) to integrate a gender perspective into environment and climate change statistics. As a result of UN Women’s advocacy and technical contributions, in October 2023 EGES [agreed to review and incorporate](#) select indicators from the Asia-Pacific set into the [Global Set of Climate](#)

## Results 2023

### Creating an enabling environment

- **The Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics was unanimously endorsed by the Heads of Planning and Statistics in the Pacific (HOPS).** The 6th Regional Conference of HOPS convened in October 2023, its first [official meeting](#) since 2017, bringing together Pacific statisticians, planners and technical partners to discuss priorities, challenges and strategies for planning and statistics in the region. UN Women presented the Pacific Roadmap, showcasing its instrumental role thus far in improving national coordination on gender statistics, through: existing gender coordination mechanisms in [Fiji](#) and [Samoa](#) that has improved collaboration with NSOs to identify gender statistics priorities; the establishment of a gender statistics taskforce in [Tonga](#); and the efforts of the Pacific Coordination Group on Gender Statistics,

[Change Statistics and Indicators](#). Furthermore, EGES is working with UN Women to adopt some of the metadata, definitions and methods developed by UN Women to measure select indicators from the Global Set, which will contribute to standardizing a methodology for countries to report progress on key environmental frameworks.<sup>1</sup>

- **The Asia-Pacific Set of Gender-Environment Indicators is being used by Cambodia to update its national set and inform strategies.** The updated regional set, supported by UN Women and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) reflects the latest methodological developments and priorities across the region. In 2023, Cambodia rolled out a new national set of gender-environment indicators, developed in partnership with UN Women, for the monitoring of national priorities such as the Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change 2018–2030.
- **More than 160 data producers and users now have a better understanding of the importance of gender statistics, and the skills necessary to collect, analyse, use and communicate gender statistics.** In 2023, UN Women co-led and co-funded two subregional trainings, in collaboration with UN Women’s COE, SIAP and SPC. The trainings, which focused on producing, using and communicating gender statistics, targeted 23 data users and 21 data producers from NSOs, gender focal points from line ministries, and civil society organizations (CSOs) from Pacific Island countries and territories and ASEAN Member States. UN Women also strengthened the capacity of the Government of [Tonga](#) to implement the Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics (35 participants were issued certificates) in January 2023. And [Samoa’s](#) Bureau of Statistics gained essential technical capacities to implement a GES through a 10-day training, after which 84 enumerators and supervisors successfully collected data in 2023.
- **The gender statistics curriculum is being used by NSOs and academia to build capacities across the region.** In 2023, seven new institutions used UN Women’s and SIAP’s [training curriculum](#) to build the capacity of government officials and university students to produce and use gender statistics. [Hong Kong](#) Baptist University has integrated it in a new undergraduate course on telling stories using gender data, reaching more than 120 students, and the Hong Kong Journalists Association also used the curriculum to train 25 journalists. A mandatory gender statistics course largely based on the curriculum is now included in a new Gender Studies graduate programme at the National University of [Mongolia](#), ensuring that all students will have substantial knowledge of how to produce and use these data in their research and in policymaking. Academics from the University of Bonn in [Germany](#) also used the materials to introduce gender analyses to a group of 25 young professionals from across Africa and Germany in June 2023, and for a lecture on mainstreaming gender in Environmental Research reaching 23 master students from across Africa at the Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d’Ivoire in July 2023. Curriculum materials were used to train 42 SDG focal points in [Bangladesh](#) and 60 new NSO staff in [India](#), ensuring that gender statistics are part of their core statistical capacities.
- **UN Women convenes and shares Asia-Pacific experiences at a key global conference on gender and environment data, resulting in a global call to action.** UN Women ensured the participation of representatives from [Cambodia](#), [Fiji](#) and [Tonga](#) at the [Global Conference on Gender and the Environment Data](#) at the Global Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai in November 2023, co-organized by UN Women (see more in Global Annex). Representing one of the most vulnerable regions to climate-related impacts, participants exchanged best practices, lessons learned and discussed solutions to common challenges. For example, Tonga’s Minister of Finance shared key lessons learned and evidence from [Tonga’s](#) first gender-environment survey and advocated for prioritizing data in shaping global climate policy [in his speeches at COP28](#). He also pledged to collaborate with stakeholders to address the issues unveiled by the survey findings and requested UN Women’s support to promote the use of the survey’s findings among policymakers to inform decision-making in his country. UN Women also shared its regional experiences on geospatial and data integration to better measure this nexus.
- **UN Women provided technical support to 15 countries<sup>2</sup> in the region to improve their production of gender statistics in 2023.** This included support to: [Bangladesh](#), to create a household satellite account to link unpaid care and domestic work to core national accounts, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of economic activity; [Samoa](#) and [Tonga](#), to implement GESs and analyse resulting data; [Indonesia](#), to develop a national index on gender equality and another index on women’s empowerment (ongoing), as well as to implement a pilot time-use survey to assess the feasibility of conducting one at the national level; and [Mongolia](#), for the ongoing analysis of gender-environment data (from a survey conducted in 2021–2022). In addition, UN Women supported the Ministries of Women in: [Pakistan](#), to design a national dashboard on gender statistics; [Nepal](#), to create communications products on LGBTIQ+ groups, using national census data; and [Papua New Guinea](#), to develop a national gender equality profile.

## Increasing data production

- **Countries are generating new gender and environment statistics, enabling monitoring and reporting on national and regional climate and environment priorities.** The NSOs of [Tonga](#) and [Samoa](#) received technical and financial support from UN Women to implement national GESs in 2023, generating their first data on women's and men's experiences managing natural resources, dealing with hazards, coping with the consequences of climate change, promoting environmental conservation, and many other issues. The [Tonga GES report](#) highlighted that 93% of the population had experienced three or more disasters in the past 12 months and revealed that women have been more affected than men by most environmental impacts, ranging from reduced incomes to increased care burdens and mental health issues (see Chapter 2). Both countries' surveys were implemented following a methodology developed by UN Women in consultation with partners<sup>3</sup> and are a result of NSO's improved capacity to generate gender statistics, facilitated by UN Women's technical support. Recognizing the value of such data, several countries are already preparing to conduct similar surveys in 2024, including [Cambodia](#) and [Kiribati](#). The surveys will help fill data gaps for monitoring the implementation of national climate and environment strategies, as well as for national reporting to global indicator frameworks.<sup>4</sup> UN Women also finalized a set of guidelines to support countries to produce quality gender-environment data ([Sampling methods and survey operations: Measuring the nexus between gender and the environment](#) and the [Enumerator Manual: Measuring the nexus between gender and the environment](#)).
- **New analysis on the effects of climate change on gender outcomes is now available, based on reprocessed data and non-conventional data sources, and is informing key policies.** Leveraging geospatial data, "random forest" machine learning and data-integration techniques to reprocess data from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), UN Women examined the connections between climate change and key gender outcomes among women in [Bangladesh](#), [Cambodia](#), [Nepal](#), [Philippines](#) and [Timor-Leste](#). The analysis noted the [disproportionate impact of climate change](#) on women's access to water and clean fuels and the consequences these disparities may bring to their life, increasing child marriage, adolescent births and violence against women. The findings were disseminated widely with national counterparts and articulated in different [products](#) targeting policymakers and making the case for examining gender and the environment in tandem. In [Cambodia](#), findings around climate change and access to clean water were used to inform the development of the upcoming Climate Change Strategic Plan Policy (to be finalized in 2024).

- **Data reprocessing is generating new evidence on how crises are affecting women and girls in the region.** In [Afghanistan](#) and [Myanmar](#), UN Women has produced factsheets on the situation of women during crises, in partnership with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). A [third factsheet on Afghanistan](#), examining how women and girls are facing increasing difficulty accessing livelihoods and coping with insufficient income by reducing food intake, was published in May. It is feeding into assessments (e.g. [GendWVer Alert 2](#) on the situation for women and girls forced to return from Pakistan) carried out by the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GIHA) Working Group – the chief inter-agency humanitarian coordination body in Afghanistan, and findings have been shared widely with partners. A first Myanmar factsheet on women in displacement with disabilities will be released in 2024. Making such timely evidence available aims to inform interventions.
- **Big data and geospatial analysis are also filling data gaps on violence against women (VAW) amid crises in the region.** UN Women harnessed big data from social media searches and posts to better understand the impacts of environmental, political and health crises on VAW in the Pacific, using [evidence and lessons from Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga](#). In September 2023, together with UN Women's ERAW team, the findings were used to train 50 service-providers from 35 CSOs across the region to better reach survivors of VAW during crises through online posts, when physical access to services may be hindered. The findings can also inform future crisis response policies, especially on how to bolster essential services and strengthen online outreach.

## Improving data use

- **UN Women identifies best practices and targeted actions to promote decent work in digitally enabled care enterprises in Southeast Asia's care economy, which are feeding into regional programmes and declarations.** In collaboration with Value for Women and supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), UN Women's Gender Statistics and WEE teams gathered and assessed emerging good practices in the digitally enabled care economy from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. The [report](#) includes recommendations for targeted policies and actions that stakeholders can take to promote decent work in the care economy. Since its release, UN Women's WEE regional team has built on the findings to design the gender track of the Asia-Pacific [Care Accelerator](#), which supports 12 care enterprises to grow their business while improving their business practices to support women employees. It also informed the design of sessions at the 2023 [Care Forum](#), where diverse stakeholders were introduced to

these good practices, including from the enterprises themselves. Lastly, the research is informing the newly drafted ASEAN Care Declaration set to launch in 2024, as well as the associated practical implementation guidelines for Member States, which aim to guide their future actions on transforming the care economy with a view to advancing WEE.

- **A new online visualization tool showing the estimated gendered effects of climate change on poverty is giving decision-makers in six countries first-time access to key data to support evidence-based decisions.**

Through a collaboration with the Pardee Center for International Futures of the University of Denver, data were modelled to [show the estimated gendered effects of climate change on poverty, productivity and food security](#) across six countries<sup>5</sup> and how these impacts could be mitigated with investments across different policy areas. The findings were developed into an [online tool](#) visualizing the potential magnitude of the different levels of investment to mitigate the effects, providing a user-friendly resource for evidence-based policymaking and planning. It was shared with countries in time for their 2024 planning cycles. Policymakers from all target countries, and from academic institutions elsewhere, were invited to conceptualize and shape the model, and provided feedback for the creation of the online tool. As a result, various decision-makers, including in [Tonga](#) and the [Philippines](#), have noted the relevance of the tool and say they plan to use it to inform decision-making.

- **20 publications generating and disseminating knowledge related to gender statistics were produced with UN Women support in 2023.** Besides those aforementioned, UN Women created an [environmental resources page](#) and produced numerous environmental publications and resources for the Global Conference on Gender and the Environment in tandem with COP28, and subsequent discussions, including [a brief](#) summarizing key issues to inform policymakers on mainstreaming gender in climate talks. Key policymakers across the region were also interviewed for a [policy brief on barriers and opportunities](#) for using gender data for decision-making, which draws on COVID-19 policy-design processes to understand if and how available data (e.g. generated by Rapid Gender Assessment surveys supported by UN Women during the pandemic) informed decisions and responses. The brief was validated by Ministries of Women and other policymakers through closed consultations where UN Women shared and refined the findings.
- **User-producer dialogues are informing data-collection activities and defining national priorities.** Such dialogues were organized in [Tonga](#) and in [Samoa](#) to identify the information needs of policymakers, CSOs and other users, to design their GES accordingly, as well

as to discuss their potential uses. This raised awareness of the importance of having gender and environment data, increased national ownership of the findings, and awakened a demand for these estimates to inform decisions. In Tonga, where the survey findings are now published, policymakers have already requested UN Women's support to translate the findings into policy recommendations. In Samoa, the data will be released in 2024. In addition, a regional dialogue, along with national dialogues were organized in [Kiribati](#), [Samoa](#), [Solomon Islands](#) and [Tonga](#) mid-February, to present, validate, and build ownership on the findings of the aforementioned big data analysis on VAW in times of crises. At these dialogues, policymakers and CSOs noted the importance of using these data to train VAW service-providers to enhance their online presence and better reach victims in times of crisis, an important observation that led to the organization of such training (mentioned above) in September. A regional user-producer dialogue was also organized in February on the topic of using gender data for evidence-informed decision-making. The dialogue resulted in stakeholders' engagement in the production of the aforementioned policy brief on the barriers and enablers for data use, including by becoming key informants and providing technical inputs from their countries' perspectives.

## Plans for 2024

1. **Creating an enabling environment:** finalize a joint workplan for the recently established coordination mechanism in ASEAN; steer the Pacific Gender Statistics Coordination Group and support the implementation of the Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics; support the Subgroup on Gender Statistics Training to update the training curriculum, with new modules on communicating gender statistics and feminist leadership in NSOs to be finalized and rolled out in 2024, along with a new communications and advocacy strategy, and an evaluation strategy to monitor the use of the curriculum.
2. **Increasing data production:** support the implementation of GESs in Cambodia, Kiribati and Samoa, including data collection, analysis and report preparation; support ASEAN countries to monitor the SDGs through data reprocessing, enhancing the availability of country data on gender-sensitive indicators and producing a new edition of the ASEAN Gender Outlook; in partnership with SPC, continue to support countries in the Pacific to reprocess data for multiple Roadmap priority areas and explore collecting time-use data through modular approaches; with ESCAP, support Fiji, Indonesia and Philippines to reprocess existing microdata to produce estimates for select indicators in the regional gender-environment set, along with policy briefs to inform

national decision-making; and build the capacity of countries to use non-conventional data sources to fill key data gaps, including by establishing a Big Data Advisory Group.

- 3. Improving data accessibility and use:** promote the use of new data on gender and the environment in Tonga and Samoa for decision-making; contribute to producing statistical estimates and generate knowledge products in partnership with environment policy experts, to inform

discussions across the three Rio Conventions, as well as to inform the development of national policies on climate and the environment; support the Government of Cambodia to design its new climate policy based on survey findings; and continue working with various parts of the ASEAN Secretariat to promote uptake of the estimates released in the ASEAN Gender Outlook and those produced by the ASEAN South-South and Triangular Cooperation Group, ensuring these are accessible to policy focal points.

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1 Such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and others.

2 Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Viet Nam.

3 Including, ESCAP, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ILO, IUCN, SPC, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).

4 Such as the SDGs, the Sendai Framework, and the Global Set of Climate Change Statistics and Indicators, among others.

5 Indonesia, Kiribati, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga.