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WOMEN COUNT PHASE II

UGANDA

The issue

Since 2017, the Women Count programme in Uganda has significantly enhanced evidence-based gender-responsive policies, planning, programming and reporting systems, yet challenges persist, including:

- A weak policy space, with more capacity-building needed for the national statistical system (NSS).
- Limited funding and technical capacity for gender statistics production, including on specialized areas such as women, peace and security and humanitarian action (WPS/HA) violence against women (VAW), and women's economic empowerment (WEE). Addressing these challenges is, therefore, crucial to monitor gender-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national policy priorities effectively.
- Insufficient data dissemination and use. Enhancing dissemination and communication capabilities is vital to empowering policymakers and users to advocate for gender-data-informed policies.

Our response

In phase II, the Women Count programme in Uganda will consolidate phase I progress, and seek to:

- **Create an enabling environment:** Guide development and monitor the implementation of the third Plan for National Statistical Development (PNSD III) and gender

sectoral plans; integrate gender statistics into policies; localize and mainstream SDG indicators into plans; strengthen coordination within the NSS through the Gender Statistics Advisory Group and National SDG Data Technical Groups; build the capacities of officials, policymakers, civil society organizations (CSOs) and media for gender data production and use; and enhance capacities on citizen-generated data (CGD) to complement official sources.

- **Increase data production:** Support the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) to conduct surveys and reprocess data; assess and support the Government to modernize administrative data-collection systems from a gender-related SDGs perspective; train ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) to enhance operationalization; and support the development of CGD and its operationalization to bridge granular data gaps on the SDGs, to complement official statistics and inform policymaking.
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** Enhance dissemination through publications, dialogues and social media materials and the visualization of gender statistics on gender web portals to improve accessibility and inform decision-making; promote research to enrich the Country Gender Equality Profile, Voluntary National Review (VNR), and reporting on the National Development Plan (NDP), Beijing Platform for Action, and the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Thematic priorities



Humanitarian Action: Conduct the second National Governance, Peace and Security Survey (NGPSS II) and integrate aspects of the second Social Institutions Gender Index (SIGI II), complemented by a qualitative dimension to update and improve the measurement of SDGs 5 and 16 and related indicators to inform policymaking; and conduct a Leave No One Behind (LNOB) assessment, to place left-behind subgroups' rights at the centre of all humanitarian and development work.



Economic Empowerment: Reprocess data, such as from the Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS), Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS), the violence against women (VAW) survey, etc., to develop policy briefs, a Women Empowerment Index, and a Gender Pay Gap analysis.

Results 2023

Creating an enabling environment

- **The Government of Uganda is now funding and integrating the results of meetings of Uganda's national SDG Data Technical Working Group (TWG), which is enhancing coordination and increasing the number of SDGs that can be monitored.** A significant step was made in institutionalizing Uganda's national SDG Data Technical Working Group (TWG) chaired by UBOS and the SDG Secretariat under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Quarterly National SDG Data TWG meetings are now a regular part of UBOS and SDG Secretariat institutional planning and budgeting cycles, with meetings and activities now funded by the Government. The SDG Data TWG comprises MDAs, CSOs, academics, researchers and UN organizations. As a result of the four quarterly SDG Data TWG meetings, which were convened to review progress on the production of SDG indicators and prioritize strategies, there is now a common understanding of indicators, metadata and ensuring the production of high-quality statistics for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs. Meeting participants also reviewed and updated the SDG Progress Report and SDG Indicator Matrix, leading to an increase in the number of SDGs with data points, from 121 in 2022 to 131 in 2023 – 32 of which are gender-specific SDG indicators (up from just 28 in 2022). The national TWG is technically supported by UN Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), and the regular review and reporting of planned activities by respective UN agencies has enhanced coordination and reduced duplication in the NSS. In addition, UN Women, UNDP and RCO, supported the national SDG Data TWG to review its draft commitments ahead of the SDG Midway Summit, aimed at driving progress over the next 7 years. As a result, one of these [national commitments](https://sdgs.un.org/national-commitments-sdg-transformation/23506) (Commitment 5) focuses on accelerating efforts to leverage data for the improvement of all Ugandans' lives. These commitments will contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021–2025 and the integration of gender statistics as an objective in the upcoming National Development Plan IV, to be drafted in 2024 at <https://sdgs.un.org/national-commitments-sdg-transformation/23506>. The TWG quarterly meetings were also used to consult stakeholders and validate the UN Joint Programme for Data and Statistics in Uganda (JPDS), leading to its approval and launch in 2023.
- **UN Women's active participation and advocacy in monthly UN SDG TWG meetings has ensured the prioritization of gender perspectives in joint UN programming, including the JPDS.** The separate UN-level SDG TWG, in which UN Women is a member, supports policy and programming coordination of the United UNSDCF and provides guidance to the national SDG Data TWG. UN Women advocacy achieved an output to ensure the tracking of gender data in the [JPDS](#), which now significantly integrates gender, thus earning a Gender Equality Marker (GEM) 2 rating. Regular engagement with the UN SDG TWG and core UN design team has increased partnership and shaped the JPDS in line with Women Count priorities through the strategic inclusion of resource mobilization to support gender statistics. Led by UBOS, in collaboration with 12 UN agencies¹ coordinated by the RCO, the JPDS was approved by the UN and Government in December 2023. UN Women will provide policy support to the Government in line with its thematic priorities.
- **Civil society partners are now better able to collect and share citizen-generated data on gender-related SDGs.** At least 44 participants, including 36 CSO partners (15 women and 14 men) and eight UN Women staff (seven women, one man), enhanced their capacities to produce and use CGD at a capacity-building retreat in July. The retreat was organized by UN Women, in collaboration with the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), to empower

CSOs implementing gender equality and women's empowerment programmes, to collect, analyse and use CGD to report on gender-specific SDG indicators. Participants also developed capacity-improvement plans for CGD, mapped data to relevant SDG indicators, compiled a CGD Metadata Matrix, and contributed data and information to the development of a prototype on gender and research on an internal CGD data hub, which is envisaged as a one-stop centre for gender data-related CGD produced by CSOs, that will be made publicly available. CSOs committed to further support the hub at a follow-up engagement meeting in July, where they underscored the need to strengthen capacities, coordination systems and data-sharing.

- **Forty Trainers-of-Trainers (ToT) have new skills, capacities and guidelines to help local governments conduct Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).** With their increased knowledge of the regional guidelines on conducting VLRs developed by UNECA, as well as on how to use different methods, tools and frameworks, the trained trainers from national institutions are now better positioned to support local governments in this process. The ToT training was delivered in March by UN Women in partnership with UNECA, and OPM's SDG Secretariat coordinated and provided technical backstopping. The new guidelines will be rolled out with technical support from the new trainers in 2024, and the new VLRs being developed based on these guidelines will feed into Uganda's third Voluntary National Review (3rd VNR 2024) report.

Increasing data production

- **UN Women ensured the integration of gender in the entire Census process, from the strategic inclusion, tracking and capturing of gender perspectives in the questionnaire, through data analysis and reporting.** Through its role alongside UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, Government MDAs and CSOs, as a member of the Census Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC), UN Women ensured the effective integration of gender considerations in the entire National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) questionnaire and provided technical guidance on integrating gender throughout the entire Census process throughout 2023. The CTAC conducted a pilot Census, for which UN Women provided a thorough gender assessment, finding that there was representation of female and male members in the leadership of district, technical and enumerator teams, which included a female Chief Administrative Officer and Resident District Coordinator, with four women and eight men enumerators. Financial and logistical support from UN Women facilitated the Electoral Commission (as part of the NSS) to monitor the pilot Census in Namayingo District. Importantly,

gender issues were meticulously captured, setting the stage for the main census scheduled for May 2024.

- **A new UN Women Metadata Handbook is contributing to a common understanding and standardization of reporting, which is improving the usability, interpretability and monitoring of SDG data and indicators.** As a result of UN Women support to develop and disseminate Uganda's Metadata Handbook for the SDGs in 2023, metadata production has improved, further facilitating the production of comparable data with other countries, and the identification of areas in the data production chain that require further reinforcement to achieve quality statistics for SDG reporting, such as concepts and definitions, analysis and interpretation, as well as capacity-building, dissemination, communication and use. Concretely, the Handbook will be used to train data producers and users in selected MDAs, local governments and CSOs, with UN Women technical support in collaboration with UBOS and EPRC in 2024.
- **Administrative data producers have strengthened capacities and a modern new data-collection tool has been developed following specialized training.** At least 51 (23 women, 28 men) producers of administrative data from 18 MDAs, nine Higher Local Governments (HLGs) and two CSOs strengthened their capacity to generate and use administrative data, and to integrate gender in the administrative data production chain, thanks to training in March 2023. Organized by UN Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and UBOS in Entebbe, the training resulted in the development of a harmonized administrative data tiled data-collection tool, with a data-flow diagram showing how the data-collection process flows from beginning to end, to support quality administrative data-collection for the trade and local economic development sectors prioritized by UBOS. The training included assessments of administrative data use, and participants identified barriers, shared experiences, specified data quality requirements, and developed workplans and capacity-improvement plans to guide the roll-out of the new tool to MDAs and HLGs in 2024.

Improving data use

- **Data from Uganda's 2020 VAW survey have contributed to amended laws and mobilized funding for new programmes and data production.** UN Women has supported the Ugandan Women's Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), which convenes over 200 Members of Parliament (MPs), to use the VAW survey data in its work, with progress on several of these laws on the floor of Parliament. For example,

a rehashed version of a Sexual Offences Bill was introduced in November 2022, which specifically seeks to address the kinds of sexual violence women and girls reported in the survey. The original bill faced backlash from MPs arguing that some aspects existed in other laws, which should be amended instead. UWOPA has simultaneously used the survey data to pressure the Government to table Penal Code amendments and argue for necessary changes to the Domestic Violence Act, Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, and Female Genital Mutilation Act, which have become outdated, in light of technology and international best practices. “The [VAWG survey] data gave us actionable information to address disparities in these laws,” [acknowledged](#) UWOPA Programme Officer Sandra Heather. The VAW survey also survey found that violence in the workplace was affecting many Ugandan women – 86% in the previous 12 months. And an Employment Amendment Bill, which proposes sexual harassment policies in the workplace, was subsequently reintroduced in Parliament in 2022 and adopted in 2023. Data from the VAW survey were also used in the proposal for a second phase of the European Union’s Spotlight on ending VAW programme, which was approved and began implementation in 2023. The EU also committed USD 30,000 to support the CGD data production on ending VAW in 2024.

- **Collaboration between the UN and Government entities is improving the alignment of policies and development plans and increasing budget allocations for the SDGs, including for gender-related programming.** This alignment has enabled the tracking of budget allocations for the SDGs, including through gender-responsive budgeting. The monitoring of SDG indicators has improved, with a focus on gender-specific indicators. According to the [Equal Opportunities Commission annual report](#), 54.35% of government agencies now have national budget compliance certificates on gender and equity, and most ministerial policy statements now prioritize gender and equity issues in their planning and budgeting.
- **Four new policy advocacy briefs were produced, increasing knowledge on challenges for women with disabilities and survivors violence against women.** UN Women in collaboration with the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), supported the analysis of gender data and developed four policy advocacy briefs focusing on critical areas: [the impact of limited access to services for victims of gender-based violence on](#)

[Uganda’s gender SDG targets; the role of informal networks and other duty bearers in protecting survivors of intimate partner violence; addressing violence against women during elections; and strategies to halt the declining labour force participation rates among female persons with disabilities](#) in Uganda. They were also mentioned in the [UNSDCF’s annual report 2023](#), expanding their potential usability by multiple UN agencies. The policy briefs will be widely disseminated among policymakers and other stakeholders in 2024.

Plans for 2024

1. **Creating an enabling environment:** Strengthen the capacities of the coordination mechanism established in phase I, which include the Gender Statistics Advisory Group and Gender Statistics Technical Working Group, to ensure the regular engagement of stakeholders; institutionalize a gender action plan in the NSDS; implement guidelines finalized in phase I aimed at improving statistical production and operations; and scale-up capacity-building for producers and users on gender statistics.
2. **Increasing data production:** Scale-up data collection to fill critical data gaps on key issues, including by: conducting a second National Governance, Peace, and Security Survey, which was not possible to undertake in 2023 because UBOS prioritized NPHC preparatory activities; supporting the Census and the thematic Gender monograph; analysing and reprocessing data from the UDHS, UNHS and Census to compute the Women Empowerment Index; and supporting administrative data collection, and citizen-generated data production processes to bridge data gaps on the SDGs and related gender data. In 2024, CSOs will also implement the CGD capacity improvement plans they developed in 2023 to generate evidence and contribute to Uganda’s VNR III.
3. **Improving data accessibility and use:** Continue to support EPRC to document data use cases and increase how data are used to inform public policies; scale up data analysis, including through the production of additional EPRC policy briefs and analytical reports on gender for SDGs monitoring to leave no one behind; enhance data dissemination through publications, dialogues and social media content and the visualization of gender statistics on gender web portals to improve accessibility; and promote research to enrich the Country Gender Equality Profile, VNR, and progress reports on the BPfA, CEDAW, and the NDP.

1 FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNGP, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO.