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WOMEN COUNT PHASE II WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

The issue

During Women Count Phase I, regional collaboration to improve gender statistics resulted in significant progress. Despite this, several challenges remain in the West and Central Africa (WCA) region:

- The production and use of gender statistics remain underdeveloped, with substantial gender data gaps in the region, specifically on time use, violence against women (VAW), gender and the environment, and administrative data to generate gender-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.
- Technical gender statistics capacities at all levels (production, analysis, communication and use) need to be strengthened among national partners, including national statistical offices (NSOs) and ministries of gender.
- Data uptake needs to be improved and abilities need to be strengthened to communicate gender statistics among national partners, civil society organizations (CSOs) and media.

Our response

Building on phase I, phase II will continue to support activities in Cameroon and Senegal but will further develop Women Count projects in countries not covered, or only partly covered, in phase I. Specifically, it will:

- **Create an enabling environment:** Enhance partnerships with regional actors such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and African Development Bank (AfDB) through strengthened capacity-development, with an emphasis on joint regional training programmes on gender statistics under the Africa Programme on Gender Statistics (APGS) 2022–2025; and assess the gender statistics systems in various new countries to identify weaknesses and propose activities to address them.

- **Increase data production:** Provide financial and technical support for new surveys in key priority areas, namely: environment and climate change (in Senegal), VAW (in Senegal and Sierra Leone), women's economic empowerment (WEE) and unpaid care and domestic work, with time-use surveys (TUS) in Nigeria, and potentially in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** Support the development of gender data communication plans at regional and country levels; create, develop, promote and maintain web pages, gender data portals and dashboards to support reporting mechanisms; and collaborate with academic and research institutions to produce gender statistics reports, policy briefs and associated products.

Where we work

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Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

countries

Thematic Priorities

- **Women's economic empowerment:** Conduct Nigeria's TUS in Kaduna, Lagos, Cross River and Borno states; include Liberia's TUS as an activity in Women Count's proposal for 2024; and develop a concept note for a TUS in Côte d'Ivoire, in partnership with the NSO.
- **Violence against women:** Support the analysis of Senegal's first-ever VAW survey implemented through its Women Count country project; support the inclusion of modules on domestic violence and WEE in the Multi-Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) of Sierra Leone and Cameroon, with technical guidance and support on questionnaire review, training and analysis; finalize the development of a Women Count project in Central African Republic (CAR), in which the implementation of a national VAW survey will be one of the main activities (subject to the availability of funds).
- **Women, peace and security:** Develop Gender Alerts and other assessments on crises affecting women, peace and security and humanitarian action (WPS-HA), such as the impacts of the coup d'état in Niger.
- **Gender and the environment:** Support the Senegal Women Count project to implement and disseminate a gender and environment survey (GES) in Senegal.

Results in 2024

Creating an enabling environment

- **With the assessments done in Nigeria, Mali and Liberia in 2024, all UN Women West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) country offices now have a national gender statistics assessment.** With the exception of Nigeria, these have all been validated by each country's NSO and gender ministry. In CAR and Mali, validation workshops were done online with the attendance of key stakeholders from ministries for women and gender focal points for other ministries. A Women Count project proposal was also drawn up in all countries (to be finalized in early 2025 in **Nigeria and Liberia**). As a result, these countries are now better equipped to conduct gender statistics work and it is now possible for country offices and NSOs to consider implementing a Women Count

programme, with activities fully in line with their needs.

- **Nigeria's third National Statistical Development Strategy (NSDS) has been revised and now fully integrates gender statistics, in line with UN Women recommendations.** With support from WCARO, Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has made gender statistics a real priority and recognizes UN Women's expertise, with all of the recommendations made by UN Women for mainstreaming gender and gender statistics reflected in all components of the 3rd NSDS, which was finalized in June 2024.
- **Despite the challenges the region faces in terms of resources mobilization, WCARO succeeded in raising funds from Agence Française de Développement (AFD).** AFD has donated 1.95 million for the **Senegal Women Count Phase II** project and EUR 550,000 for WCARO, which enabled the Women Count regional project to expand to two new countries, **Chad** and **Mauritania** and expand the scope of work in **Senegal**. The assessments of the gender statistics systems of these two new countries are ongoing and will allow an even more complete picture of the situation of gender statistics in the region.
- **At least 543 users and producers increased their gender statistics capacities as a result of WCARO training and awareness-raising on the use of gender data in advocacy, strategy and national programme development in 2024.** New audiences were targeted (such as CSOs and journalists) and new topics (such as communications and citizen data for CSOs and the use of statistics for gender-responsive budgeting) were included to accommodate their various needs, with the following results:
 - 174 participants at a two-day workshop on user-producer dialogues on gender statistics in Kinshasa, **DRC** (from the NSO, Ministry of Gender and other ministries, donors, UN agencies, media, CSOs and universities) now have a better understanding of gender statistics, sources and the way to find accurate information. The NSO is also more aware of users' needs and has drawn up a roadmap that includes users at every stage.
 - 122 institutional actors in **DRC**, from the Ministries of Planning, Gender, Budget and Agriculture, and the NSO, now have a better understanding of gender-responsive budgeting and how to allocate resources based on the needs of specific populations, after targeted training.
 - 34 participants from five regional women's CSOs (with members from almost all WCARO countries), who met in Dakar as part of the initial activities of the regional project's new expansion to **Chad** and **Mauritania**, now have a better understanding of gender statistics and the challenges every country faces in monitoring progress on the SDGs. The training also raised awareness of the importance of good communication, increased participants' knowledge on where to find accurate information using NSO reports and websites, and built their ability to write short, simple, powerful sentences using data to support their argument.
 - 64 participants from five countries (**Senegal, Mauritania, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad** and **Guinea**) now have a better understanding of how to use and produce VAW data after attending a regional workshop organized by Expertise France (under the "EDIFIS" project) in **Chad**. UN Women WCARO was invited to participate in training CSOs five countries on VAW indicators and gender statistics. The workshop was also an opportunity to strengthen collaboration with AFD.
 - 149 participants – mainly from NSOs and ministries of gender and education from 33 countries – are now familiar with what's been done in the last year in the field of gender statistics. They also have a better understanding of funding mechanisms from international partners, and how to implement resource mobilization strategies, after attending the 6th Africa Forum on Gender Statistics organized by WCARO, ESARO, UNECA and AfDB in Gaborone, **Botswana**, in July 2024.

Increasing data production

- **Nigeria Bureau of Statistics data producers' improved skills and capacities were put to work to collect and analyse TUS data, with the preliminary results of the first wave of the TUS in Nigeria now complete.** In 2024, UN Women and NBS organized several meetings to plan the implementation of the TUS, which initially only covered four states (Borno, Cross River, Kaduna and Lagos), after attempts to raise resources at the donors' roundtable in May 2024 fell short of their goal for national coverage. The first wave was completed during the wet season, with a total of 1,543 men and 1,680 women aged 15+ surveyed. NBS produced a preliminary report [in November 2024](#) as an initial step in interpreting the data collected, identifying patterns and providing a foundation for deeper policy analysis and programme development. Data collection for the second wave (dry season) will start in January 2025.
- **Senegal completed its first VAW survey in 2024 with the technical and financial support of Women Count Senegal and technical and dissemination support from WCARO.** The support provided by WCARO at all stages of the survey contributed to obtaining quality data, particularly during the technical review of the questionnaire and report. A [summary report](#), prepared with WCARO contributions on both content and format, is now available. This survey provides comprehensive information on VAW in Senegal, revealing in particular that violence begins in childhood, with three-quarters of women saying they experienced physical violence before the age of 18. The full final report will be available in 2025.
- **Preparatory work is already underway on the first African Gender and the Environment Survey in Senegal, with funding from AFD.** To be implemented in 2025 by Senegal's NSO (ANSD) as part of the Women Count project, WCARO has been translating the questionnaires, training and survey tools as well as the list of indicators into French. Furthermore, a brief about the GES was also designed by WCARO in [French](#) and [English](#) (using the results of the GES in Tonga to illustrate the type of information/indicators this survey can provide). WCARO has shared this brief with NSOs across the region at international events (Africa Stats Comm, World Data Forum, etc.).
- **WCARO supported the UN Women Mali Country Office to implement a qualitative rapid assessment of the gender-differentiated impact of the crises in the Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao regions.** The study revealed that it is imperative to work on solid methodologies that enable quality information to be collected quickly – such as the new Humanitarian Toolkit developed by Women Count in ESARO – coupled with well-defined indicators that can provide information on the impact of various crises on women.

Improving data use

- **Having a dedicated Gender Statistics Communications Specialist for Women Count WCARO team has catalysed visibility and advocacy.** Since this specialist was hired in November 2023, activities aimed at communicating gender statistics and improving the visibility of Women Count in the region among the general public, have expanded significantly. In 2024, several communication events were implemented, including consultations and training for CSOs, media and statisticians on disseminating and using VAW data for action and advocacy, with widespread media outreach. Communications materials were also designed, developed and printed to support the visibility of the Women Count project, which have been distributed during key activities with partners. A comprehensive communications strategy for Women Count WCARO, and a communications plan for the AFD-funded programme was also finalized.
- **The first-ever Gender Statistics User-Producer Dialogue in DRC garnered substantial media attention, increased awareness and sparked calls for repeat regular dialogues.** The two-day dialogue in November, organized by WCARO and Women Count DRC, in partnership with the National Institute of Statistics, brought together 174 participants

from various ministries (Planning, Economy, Gender), State institutions (SDG Observatory NSO, Census Bureau) and CSOs. Through a variety of presentations (on NSDS and gender mainstreaming, NSO databases and access to information, the status of progress on gender-related SDGs, the use of gender statistics in national planning, etc.), this first dialogue shed light on the situation of gender statistics in the country. The main recommendation was to institutionalize this event at a national level, but also at a decentralized level, given the size and diversity of the DRC. As highlighted by one CSO participant, who realized at the meeting that the data she has been collecting for years on issues such as violence, health and other areas may not align with international statistical quality standards: *"We need spaces like this for open dialogue, to express ourselves, have our voices heard, engage with statistical experts and strengthen our technical capacities. Only then can we collect and analyse our data effectively, ensuring it is used in ways that truly benefit the women of the Democratic Republic of Congo."* The event also received significant media coverage, facilitated by WCARO in partnership with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in DRC. At least eight media stories were broadcast on national television news channels citing the event and gender statistics, and several articles were published in print and online media. WCARO and partners also developed content for social media.

- **At least 58 journalists, statisticians, officials and activists have strengthened their ability to effectively communicate gender data, draft messages and use the results of Senegal's VAW survey in their advocacy.** Since the third quarter of 2024, WCARO has been working with ANSD and the Senegal Country Office to develop a communications plan for the VAW survey. In November, WCARO supported the Senegal Country Office in organizing a workshop dedicated to developing communications materials, to strengthen stakeholders' capacity to effectively communicate VAW and gender statistics and to advocate for the use of such data. During this workshop, the 58 participants co-created impactful messages, including a two-page advocacy brief for policymakers, social media assets and communication plans. These media products will be launched in 2025 when the final survey report is made widely available.

Plans for 2025

1. **Creating an enabling environment:** In 2025, the regional project will finalize gender statistics assessments in Chad and Mauritania and design Women Count projects to be submitted for funding to AFD and other donors and included in the Phase III proposal for the Women Count programme. Since 2024, WCARO has extended its presence into new countries such as Gabon and Burkina Faso (in 2025, Cape Verde will also be covered), with both NSOs already showing interest in strengthening their gender statistics systems, through potential assessments to lay the foundations for priority gender statistics activities. Regional capacity-building will be expanded, especially in Chad and Mauritania, with training on communicating gender statistics, administrative data and the use of citizen data to provide gender equality indicators. In 2025, WCARO will also develop its new Strategic Note (2026–2029), as the UN Women Strategic Note 2026–2029 and proposal for a phase III of the Women Count programme 2026–2030 are simultaneously being developed to ensure that these three strategies are fully aligned.
2. **Increasing data production:** Data collection and analysis will be scaled up to fill critical data gaps on key issues in response to regional needs. Support will be provided for the analysis and final reporting of the TUS in Nigeria that will combine the two survey waves (wet and dry seasons) and provide information to the flagship intervention on the care economy in Nigeria, especially on care policy and economic valuations. Senegal's GES, the first of its kind in Africa, will run from January to September 2025, implemented by ANSD with technical and financial support from both WCARO and Senegal Women Count projects. The Women Count Asia-Pacific regional team will deliver a ToT in Senegal on technical environmental concepts and terminology to ensure GES data, and provide technical support to ANSD on data collection and analysis/tabulation. Various countries (such as Cape Verde, CAR and Mauritania) have expressed interest in a VAW survey and requested

support for the development of a methodological note integrating emerging issues (VAW against older women, political and online violence, obstetrical violence, etc.). The Regional Snapshot on Gender and the SDGs will be finalized and disseminated, presenting the latest evidence on all 54 gender-specific SDG indicators. A regional study on gender/parity observatories, on their status, work and resources, will be completed in early 2025, followed by a workshop with observatories to improve their capacities and visibility. Care economy factsheets will be produced and published for five francophone countries and three anglophone countries in the subregion, to provide an overview of government policies, make the business case for investing in the care economy, and offer action-oriented recommendations for policymakers, researchers, CSOs, etc.

3. **Improving data accessibility and use:** Organize events, such as the launch of the regional snapshot and three national (Chad, Mauritania and Senegal) snapshots on gender indicators. The region will host the 7th Africa Forum on Gender Statistics, in partnership with ESARO, UNECA and AfDB. WCARO will also organize, in partnership with AFD, a regional workshop on gender observatories. WCARO will develop a communications plan, in collaboration with UN Women Nigeria and NBS for the results of the TUS, and with the Senegal Women Count project and ANSD for the results of the GES. A draft communications plan for the AFD-funded projects, developed by the Communication Specialist in 2024, will also be finalized in early 2025.