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## 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 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; however, the outbreak of the crisis in Gaza in October 2023 disrupted the regional situation and programme planning, leading to some reprogramming; however, its long-term goal is still 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

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countries

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

## Thematic Priorities

- **Women, peace and security and humanitarian action:** Produce data on the various impacts of the war in Gaza, **Palestine**, and neighbouring countries such as **Lebanon** and **Syria**, on women and girls, to inform the humanitarian response.
- **Women's 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 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 UNFPA and the World Health Organization (WHO).

## Results in 2024

### *Creating an enabling environment*

- **Strong UN Women advocacy contributes to the adoption of two key recommendations on gender data to track the SDGs by the regional UN Statistical Committee.** In October 2024, two recommendations were adopted in the outcome document of the sixteenth session of the Statistical Committee meeting convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Government of **Bahrain**. The recommendations refer to strengthening gender statistics production by national statistical offices (NSOs), and UN support to NSOs to increase the availability of gender data for SDG monitoring from a gender perspective. This milestone outcome is the result

of strong advocacy by UN Women for the availability of gender data to track the SDGs from a gender perspective in the region. UN Women also presented the current gender statistics gaps to the regional statistical committee meeting, which was attended by relevant international organizations and NSOs from across the region.

- **Tunisia's NSO has developed an [Action Plan](#) to address data gaps for gender-specific SDG indicators.** The action plan outlines the necessary gender data per development sector, the surveys and censuses required to fill the gaps, the timeframe and the responsible government stakeholders for data availability. Developed in partnership with UN Women, this action plan seeks to enable **Tunisia** to improve its SDG reporting and complements the country's NSDS for 2024–2026.
- **More than 80 government officials from 15 countries enhanced their capacity to collect and analyse gender-related SDG data through training from UN Women and other UN agencies.** In May 2024, 20 participants from key national institutions in **Bahrain**, including the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Supreme Council for Women, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior and the e-Government Authority, participated in a roundtable on concrete steps to increase the availability of SDG 5 data. After nine UN agencies presented the available gender data for SDG 5, a way forward to address the gaps was agreed upon with Bahrain's Ministry of Sustainable Development. Additionally, 61 staff from the Ministry of Justice, NSOs and civil registration entities in 14 countries across the Arab region enhanced their capacity to harmonize and close the gaps in data availability on marriage and divorce, especially on the SDG indicators collected through civil registration and vital statistics (CRSV). UN Women contributed to the training workshop organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and ESCWA, by presenting the challenges faced by women without formal marriage certificates. The resulting recommendations for Arab States include: the need to standardize data collection on marriage and divorce across countries to ensure comparability and digitize data-collection; leverage existing data from health, education and social service sectors; conduct regular national surveys with questions on marriage and divorce; promote legal reforms to ensure accurate documentation; among others. Recommendations for UNFPA and regional partners related to the need to strengthen regional cooperation and partnerships on data-collection; build capacities; document best practices and advocate for a standard agenda on CRSV at the regional intergovernmental level, among others.

### *Increasing data production*

- **Data capturing women's needs amid the war and humanitarian crisis in Gaza contributed to more than 82,000 individuals receiving food and non-food assistance, shelter, essential protection, legal and other essential services.** In 2024, 18,280 women-headed households, equivalent to one-third of all women-headed households in **Gaza**, received emergency food assistance from UN Women in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP). Additionally, 43,335 individuals in Gaza and the **West Bank**, including 32,729 women, 7,031 men, 2,045 girls and 1,530 boys (including 1,003 women and 324 men with disabilities), were able to receive multisectoral services to prevent and responds to gender-based violence (GBV). This included GBV case management, shelter and reintegration assistance, legal awareness sessions, psychosocial support, community-level awareness initiatives on GBV and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as emergency livelihood responses (cash-for-work and cash assistance) facilitated by UN Women Palestine in partnership with women-led civil society organizations (CSOs). Furthermore, 17,200 women and 3,800 children in Gaza and the West Bank received non-food items, including tailored kits with hygiene and winter products, supplied by the UN Women Egypt Country Office in partnership with the Egyptian Red Crescent, the UN Women Country Office in Jordan, in collaboration with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization. These efforts were informed by data generated by the UN Women's Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) on the war's impact on women and girls in Gaza, aimed at guiding humanitarian responses. The data and results team produced three knowledge products in 2024: (1) [Gender Alert: The Gendered Impact of the Crisis in Gaza](#); (2) [Gender](#)

[Alert: Scarcity and Fear: A Gender Analysis of the War's Impact on Vital Services Essential to Women's and Girls' Health, Safety, and Dignity – Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene \(WASH\)](#); and (3) [Gender Alert: Gaza: A War on Women's Health](#). These data products provided a comprehensive overview of the situation in Gaza and detailed UN Women's actions under its [six-month multisectoral crisis response](#), spanning 2023 and 2024, leading to heightened advocacy for the inclusion of women and girls in on-the-ground interventions.

- **A Data Response Plan was developed to address the conflict in Lebanon.** This plan, produced by ASRO's data and results team for UN Women Lebanon in the fourth quarter of 2024, served as a foundation for producing Gender Alerts for Lebanon and coordinating with humanitarian actors to ensure that gender analysis is included in their responses. The data and results team provided technical support, leveraging its experience in data collection for the Gaza conflict and other humanitarian crises in the region to develop this plan. The regional team also estimated the number of women and girls that had been internally displaced by the conflict in Lebanon (530,000), which was [tweeted](#) by UN Women's Executive Director.

### *Improving data use*

- **The Arab States' regional gender data portal was strengthened with qualitative data on laws, policies and strategies that have changed the way quantitative data are used, to deepen insights and enhance the portal's usefulness.** In 2024, [GenTRACK](#) – an advanced digital solution designed to monitor and promote gender equality and women's rights in the Arab States region through sex-disaggregated data – was upgraded. Relevant political, social and economic events have been incorporated as qualitative information to enable users – including government officials, policymakers, development specialists, academics and CSOs – to gain a deeper understanding of changes in quantitative results for these indicators. These qualitative data were added to GenTRACK to provide greater context and insights in Arabic. For example, they include data on existing laws, policies and strategies, such as on: [political violence against women](#); [duration of maternity leave](#); [paternity leave benefits](#); [equal pay for work of equal value](#); [redress of sexual harassment](#); [non-discrimination in access to jobs](#); etc. UN Women is supporting **Qatar** with the production of its Voluntary National Review in 2025, which will use several of these data points. UN Women ASRO launched GenTRACK in 2023 as an advanced digital platform for monitoring and promoting gender equality and women's rights in the Arab States region. The platform now hosts 194 gender-related indicators, offering a comprehensive perspective on the status of women and girls in the region, and continues to grow in its scope and use. The GenTRACK dashboard received nearly 15,000 views in 2024, with visitors spending an average 7 minutes on the page.
- **Best practices for utilizing gender data for sustainable development were showcased at two [Communities of Practice](#) meetings.** The first was a [roundtable](#) leading up to International Women's Day 2024, focusing on the Women Count programme. It brought together sector actors to advocate for investing in women to accelerate progress through moderated discussions on investing in gender data as a vehicle for driving change; prioritizing gender-responsive budgeting; shifting to a care society; and implementing gender-responsive financing. The UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank provided continental perspectives; Data 2X presented a global view on the status of investment in gender data; and **Morocco** shared best practices on gender-responsive budgeting. African award-winning media professionals presented fresh insights on gender data storytelling to increase awareness. The second Community of Practice meeting was organized by the National Planning Council of **Qatar** in partnership with UN Women ASRO, with 30 participants. This online regional webinar showcased best practices on using gender data and statistics for sustainable development. UN Women highlighted the GenTRACK platform as an innovative digital solution for sharing gender data; **Kuwait** discussed the representation of women in the private sector; **Jordan** presented how it integrates gender statistics within regular statistical work; and **Morocco**

shared additional best practices on gender-responsive budgeting, with **Qatar** expressing interest in implementing GRB and the two countries have since held follow-up meetings.

## Plans for 2025

1. **Creating an enabling environment:** Support the dissemination of the action plan on gender statistics for **Tunisia's** NSDS for 2024–2026; advocate for and produce assessments of the status of gender statistics in **Saudi Arabia** and **Iraq**; support the coordination of gender data activities in the region; and build stakeholder capacities on gender-related SDG goals and indicators in the region, as requested by governments.
2. **Increasing data production:** Continue supporting data production on the impact of the war on women and girls in **Gaza/Palestine** and **Lebanon**; and provide technical support to **Morocco** to undertake the time-use survey in 2025.
3. **Improving data accessibility and use:** Facilitate the dissemination of *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab States: The Gender Snapshot*, in partnership with ESCWA; continue disseminating findings from the Gender Alerts on the impact of the war in **Gaza/Palestine** and **Lebanon** to inform humanitarian responses; support the finalization of the second-phase upgrade of the GenTRACK portal; and organize regional Community of Practice events related to gender data.