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WOMEN COUNT PHASE II EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

The issue

Despite significant progress in Women Count phase I, remaining challenges in East and Southern Africa (ESA) include:

- Gaps stemming from a lack of political will, limited institutional capacity, poor coordination, inadequate normative frameworks, the absence of national minimum sets of gender indicators to enable reporting, as well as limited or non-existent data quality assurance frameworks.
- Substantial gender data gaps remain on issues such as women's economic empowerment (WEE), time use, violence against women (VAW), governance, land tenure and gender and the environment. Administrative data systems are generally of poor quality and underused for statistics and reporting. There is a dependence on donor funding to support household surveys for gender statistics, making them unsustainable.
- There is a need to approach gender data and statistics communication, advocacy and the promotion of data use in a more strategic and systematic manner.

Our response

Phase II will: scale up its support to more countries in the region,ⁱ specifically to:

- **Create an enabling environment:** Foster greater collaboration between regional stakeholders via the Africa Programme on Gender Statistics (APGS); expand partnerships with regional economic communities; support more countries to assess constraints to mainstreaming gender into national statistics systems (NSSs); develop new National Strategies on the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and gender statistics sector plans; and improve the gender statistics capacities of government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other key actors.

- **Increase data production:** Strengthen quality assurance in all areas of data collection, including to produce or reprocess data in new areas, such as VAW, WEE and the gender-environment-humanitarian nexus; explore the use of non-conventional data sources; put gender indicator sets at regional and national level into practice to improve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring; and modernize statistical operations and business processes, including to improve the use of administrative data to address gaps, through the Collaborative on Administrative Data (CAD).
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** Increase the accessibility and use of gender statistics by creating gender data portals and dashboards; improve international reporting;ⁱⁱ strengthen outreach and communication; and partner with academic and research institutions to develop papers and statistical knowledge products.

Where we work

17

countries

Botswana, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Thematic Priorities

- **Gender and the environment:** Develop a toolkit on gender data production and use in crises precipitated by climate change and measure gender-related impacts using tools developed by Women Count in Asia-Pacific.
- **Women's economic empowerment:** Partner with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to assess gender data gaps in financial inclusion and asset ownership in the region and build the capacity of national statistics offices (NSOs), ministries of women and finance, and other relevant stakeholders to measure women's financial inclusion.
- **Violence against women:** Modernize and improve the quality of Somalia and Lesotho's crime and gender-based violence (GBV) administrative data systems; and test the [femicide statistical framework](#) developed by UN Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- **Women, peace and security:** Partner with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to collect women, peace and security (WPS) and women's political participation (WPP) data and identify capacity gaps in IGAD countries.ⁱⁱⁱ

Results in 2024

Creating an enabling environment

- **A ground-breaking gender data in humanitarian settings toolkit is guiding humanitarian actors to collect and use gender data to improve programming.** Women Count contributed to increasing access to important gender data and statistical resources for use in humanitarian settings with its development of [Bridging Gaps: Essential Gender data Toolkit for Humanitarian Action](#), which was launched at the World Data Forum 2024. The toolkit is the first of its kind globally and provides an accessible compendium of resources

for producing and using gender data in humanitarian settings. It delves into themes such as GBV, food security, shelter and protection, humanitarian assistance for women and children, livelihoods and health. The toolkit is tailored to build capacity and provide guidance to governments, CSOs, humanitarians, decision-makers, statisticians and users of gender statistics. It was jointly developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) as a direct resolution of the Africa Gender Statistics Forum (AGSF) 2023. The toolkit is already being used in Africa and abroad, with the UN Women Country Office and Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group in Ukraine planning to use it in their work in 2025.

- **A new Southern Africa report and toolkit on gender and financial inclusion, coupled with training for government officials in 15 countries, is expanding regional insight and understanding.** Women Count facilitated training for 89 government officials from 15 SADC countries on a financial inclusion toolkit developed by UN Women in partnership with SADC. The toolkit is the first of its kind and focuses on how to mainstream gender in financial inclusion data systems as well as measure outcomes and impact through dedicated indicators and guidelines for developing surveys. It provides guidelines and recommended statistical best practices for the production of financial inclusion data from a gender perspective, including lessons from **Zambia's** success in boosting financial inclusion for women by 50%. The toolkit training was attended by officials from Ministries of Gender, Finance, Central Banks and NSOs from SADC Member States. The toolkit's development was underpinned by a 2024 [subregional report](#) that examines the status of gender and financial inclusion in 16 SADC countries. It found an 8% gender gap in account ownership, and lower access for women to insurance, pensions, credit, savings and digital financial services. The study analysed existing data from the Global Financial Access Survey, Global Findex and FinScope surveys, evaluated the status of key financial inclusion indicators, and provided a comparative analysis of women and men.
- **Guidance on the collection and use of administrative data on discrimination and inequality in Africa is helping NSOs better measure trends and inform policymaking.** Women Count teams in UN Women Regional Offices in East and Southern Africa (ESARO) and West and Central Africa (WCARO) supported the Praia Group on Governance Statistics to develop [guidance on the collection and use of administrative data on discrimination and inequality](#), by funding and supervising an African continent-wide technical background study. Covering 22 countries in all five subregions,^{iv} the study aimed to identify current practices, as well as data and capacity gaps. The guidance will be used by NSOs to better measure and monitor trends on discrimination and inequalities and generate data to inform policymaking in this area.
- **A new study on WPS and WPP data and capacity gaps in seven countries has informed the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's first Gender Statistics Strategy.** Seven IGAD countries are expected to improve their WPS administrative data systems for policymaking and strategy development as a result of a Women Count-led study to identify WPS gender data gaps and propose solutions. This study was done in collaboration with IGAD to identify current and potential data sources (administrative and survey data) from governmental and non-governmental bodies that can be used to monitor WPS national and regional action plans. The findings of the report have already informed IGAD's first-ever Gender Statistics Strategy, which will aid in resource mobilization for stronger country-led data systems. Developed in 2024 with financial and technical support from UN Women, the IGAD strategy will be validated in 2025.
- **The capacity of the African Union Commission (AUC) to create structures, improve coordination and develop gender statistics reports has been enhanced through the [assessment of gender data and capacity gaps](#) led by UN Women in collaboration with UNECA and PARIS21.** The findings, which reveal that AUC staff lack the capacity to produce gender statistics, will be used for resource mobilization for AUC gender statistics work. The study also provided a basis for further AUC-UN Women collaboration on gender mainstreaming, and discussions are ongoing with StatAfriq to start with basic

gender data literacy training for AUC staff in 2025.

- **A gender analysis of national surveys conducted from 2021–2023 in Zimbabwe highlights data and capacity gaps and will inform the development of a new gender statistics plan.** Developed in collaboration between UN Women ESARO and Zimbabwe's NSO, the findings were compiled into a [comprehensive report](#) and an integrated matrix of gender indicators highlighting data and capacity gaps related to gender statistics in Zimbabwe. The findings will be used to inform the development of a gender statistics plan for Zimbabwe and the development of the NSDS III, both in 2025.

Increasing data production

- **Administrative data quality is improving in three countries, thanks to a toolkit, training and action plans.** The [Toolkit for Quality Assessment of Administrative Data for Official Statistics](#), developed in 2022 in partnership with the Collaborative on Administrative Data, was used by UN Women ESARO to train 95 government officials from the NSOs of **Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Sudan** in March 2024. The training focused on how to evaluate and improve administrative data quality in data sets, with participants developing related action plans to guide their work. According to participant Asnakech Tamene, CEO of Social and Inclusiveness for the Ethiopia Statistical Service, the toolkit and training were “timely and highly relevant to our work since it gave us a push to improve the quality of administrative data and the action planning sessions were practical because they helped us directly apply what was learned to our national context. We got inspired and have since introduced checklists for administrative data quality and ... we are on a reform path.” The three trainings and the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) [National Quality Assurance Framework new guidelines on administrative data](#) also informed Women Count's development of a revised administrative data quality toolkit in 2024. UNSD also introduced the toolkit in trainings in Sierra Leone and Indonesia, and a CAD e-learning course also includes elements from the toolkit. The beta version was developed in 2024 and is currently being tested, with a final version on the UNSD/CAD portal in March 2025.
- **UN Women is contributing to innovation and the modernization of statistical production through leading the development of a beta version of a Toolkit on Linking Administrative Data, Survey/Census and Other Data Sources.** The beta version of the toolkit was used to train 25 officials from the **Kenya** National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and Government ministries in September. This work was done in partnership with UNECA and the UNSD, with potential global uses, and will continue into 2025. Once finalized, the toolkit will be shared with NSOs through various platforms, such as the CAD, for further uptake and use.
- **The Somalia National Bureau of Statistics (SNBS) has strengthened its administrative data production on crime and GBV by working with various ministers and examining data quality and production processes.** The collaboration between the SNBS and producers of crime and GBV statistics at the federal level followed a 2023 assessment of administrative data quality in Somalia that used the aforementioned administrative data quality toolkit, and training for 38 officials, for which SNBS received financial and technical support from Women Count. This culminated in the production of the first-ever crime and GBV statistics report for Benadir State in 2024, which was primarily based on administrative data. The report found that violent crimes increased by 15%, with males representing 70% of the victims of murder and assault, while women represented 85% of reported rape and GBV cases, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the distinct vulnerabilities faced by different demographic groups. UN Women and SNBS are working on a second phase of the project to expand this work to Lower Juba, Galmudug, South West State, Hirshabella and Puntland.
- **Lesotho's NSO now possesses the necessary skills and capacity to support the criminal justice system to produce femicide data following the testing of the [Femicide Statistics Framework](#) supported by UN Women.** The testing was based on administrative crime

statistics and involved two workshops and user-producer dialogues discussing how to produce femicide statistics, as well as the compilation of femicide estimates for the years 2020–2023. [The test](#) ultimately concluded that Lesotho is not yet ready to produce femicide statistics (very few countries are, globally). As a result, the NSO and the gender machinery now have a better understanding of the importance of defining femicide and its statistical measurement and have started discussing how to improve their systems and capacities in order to collect femicide statistics. The workshops fostered coordination and strengthened informal networks of researchers working on femicide and producing femicide statistics.

Improving data use

- Media outreach and dialogues around the 16 Days garnered significant coverage, expanding public awareness on GBV.** Gender data were at the forefront of a massive media campaign for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence 2024, starting with a [joint radio interview](#), followed by reflections in a [radio discussion](#), a [televised Town Hall meeting](#) with an array of governmental, justice sector and CSO actors. The media campaign concluded with a [wrap-up radio interview](#) on 10 December and an article published in a major local daily newspaper: “[A Tale of Five Countries – How Gender Data is Transforming Services for GBV Survivors](#)”. The latter piece showcases how **Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda** are using gender data to pinpoint hotspots and issues for policy and other solutions. For example, in **Tanzania**, gender data have helped to inform a motion in Parliament advocating for more resources for the police to combat GBV. It has also been instrumental in engaging the private sector to contribute resources such as motorcycles for regular patrols and support for the construction of additional police posts to boost security at the grass-roots level. In **Kenya**, UN Women ESARO hosted the SDFGAA, GROOTS-Kenya, Plan International and Kenya’s National Gender and Equality Commission for a series of media dialogues during the 16 Days, strengthening collaboration with actors that harnessed this opportunity to raise awareness on GBV data and promote their use for advocacy and policymaking. The media dialogues were broadcast as part of a radio series on Kenya’s Spice FM “The Situation Room” talk show for intelligent talk on trending topics. The show is streamed live on YouTube, giving it regional and global reach, with a viewership of 19,000 on the mornings that featured the GBV discussions.^v One of the underpinning messages throughout the media series was that global femicide rates have increased in the past year; with a woman killed every 10 minutes, compared to every 11 minutes in 2022. Data show that the main perpetrators of physical violence against women in Kenya are husbands or intimate partners and that social tolerance for VAW persists, with 42% of women and 36% of men believing that a man may be justified for beating his wife under certain circumstances. By the start of the 16 Days campaign in November 2024, Kenya had recorded at least 97 femicide cases in the past three months.^{vi}
- Women Count promoted the uptake and use of gender data by raising awareness, including through new knowledge products, media outreach and training, stakeholder forums and data storytelling.** UN Women has collaborated with diverse stakeholders to strengthen their capacity to communicate gender data and use it in policy advocacy. UN Women also continued to document instances of gender data use in policies and programmes across the region and published use cases from [Ethiopia](#), [Kenya](#) and [Tanzania](#), with a similar case study from **Rwanda** forthcoming in early 2025. The “Learn From” series identified and documented numerous instances where UN Women’s support and collaboration has resulted in the concrete uptake and use of gender data. For instance, in **Tanzania**, findings of the [Social Institutions and Gender Index \(SIGI\) Survey](#), published and disseminated in collaboration with UN Women, are being used in advocacy with policymakers to pass the pending Marriage and Divorce Bill, currently before Parliament, which would increase the minimum age for marriage for girls from 15 to 18 years. Gender data have further informed capacity-building for police and the number of police personnel with required training in both the Mainland and in Zanzibar, and have

resulted in the establishment of police gender desks for the confidential reporting of GBV cases.^{vii}

- **In Ethiopia, gender data informed a 2024 update of the country's 1993 National Women's Policy, labour laws and migration laws, as well as shaping its new VAW Policy.** Gender data, published in the [Country Gender Equality Profile](#) produced by UN Women and partners, informed the 2024 update of the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs' National Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, which has been reviewed by relevant ministries and councils and is awaiting ratification to become law. Gender data have also influenced migration laws to promote equal employment opportunities for migrant women, and a new government migration policy (awaiting approval) emphasizes gender-responsive data-collection, analysis and use in policymaking. A new Making Migration Safe for Women Programme was created in late 2023 with a specific objective to "create strong synergies with Women Count". Its 2024 [data on migrant women's higher remittances than men](#) have already influenced the creation of an Overseas Employment Unit and a new Commission on job creation and skills. In addition, Ethiopia is currently using data on child marriage and harmful traditional practices as well as analysis of existing GBV laws in the process of developing a policy on ending VAW. This policy is expected to inform action and the allocation of financial and human resources.
- **A cutting-edge national web-based gender information system was developed and rolled out in Ethiopia, shaped in part by UN Women through a series of consultations and statistical capacity-building.** This [new system](#), developed by MoWSA, contains key gender indicators in social, economic, political and related spheres. The information system already gathers sound data, including administrative data, which have been used to influence programming as well as policy development. For example, both the Gender Equality Policy and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics in Ethiopia acknowledge administrative data as an important source of official statistics for the NSO to standardize and apply alongside census, sample surveys and other sources of data. The data system has been used to populate the minimum set of gender indicators and will also inform the 2025 Gender Snapshot and Voluntary National Review reports for Ethiopia.
- **In Zimbabwe, UN Women supported a data user-producer symposium that is informing gender analysis, future surveys and the country's gender statistics sector plan.** The event served as a networking opportunity, with discussions aimed at ensuring that gender-specific and gender-relevant data and indicators will be included in future data collection. Examples are the inclusion of questions on women's and girls' experiences of online violence and sexual harassment in the country's next Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). This user-producer dialogue has also informed Women Count's 2024 gender analysis of all national surveys (that were conducted between 2021 and 2023) and the Census. The gender analysis of these statistical products will also inform the development of the gender sector statistics sector plan in 2025, as the report highlights key gaps and opportunities.
- **New collaborations between UN Women, media thought-leaders and academics focused on media studies are promoting data use, particularly for policy advocacy.** Events such as an Africa-Arab States roundtable discussion for International Women's Day 2024, held in partnership with UNECA and AfDB, have served to strengthen links with these organizations and promote even more knowledge-sharing and innovation. UN Women also deepened collaboration with the INGO iMMAP by providing a customized training on communicating gender data and optimizing its use for policy advocacy. This engagement led to further collaboration via a [joint OpEd](#) published in late 2024 to highlight GBV data and other gender data gaps and to advocate for more investment in these areas and the increased use of existing data.
- **Strengthened partnership with GROOTS Kenya in jointly publishing the Gender Data Uptake and Use Toolkit 'Unlocking the Value of Gender Data: A Regional Toolkit for Transformative Action'** has led to further collaboration. The development of the toolkit

required in-depth consultations with diverse actors including media, regional CSOs and INGOs (e.g., FEMNET and Oxfam), Kenya's SDfGAA, Office of the Gender Advisor to the President, KNBS and academia. Along the way, the process fostered goodwill for both UN Women ESARO and UN Women Kenya, creating further opportunities to leverage synergies with these actors (e.g., for the International Day of the Girl Child and 16 Days of Activism against GBV in 2024).

Plans for 2025

1. **Enabling environment:** Finalize the East Africa Community (EAC) gender statistics strategy, for which consultations started in 2024; support the NSO to develop a gender statistics strategy in **Zimbabwe**; validate the SADC Toolkit on financial inclusion and use it to develop global guidance on gender and financial inclusion statistical best practices, in partnership with the World Bank; complete the review of gender mainstreaming in World Food Programme (WFP) food security data systems; provide capacity-building in partnership with SADC and GIZ on metadata for the SADC GBV annual reporting framework, data governance and research uptake and use, as well as on GBV administrative data quality; provide technical support and facilitate training for SADC Member States on GBV prevalence surveys; finalize the Guidance on Interoperability and Linking Administrative Data with Other Data Sets after the final training planned for **South Africa**, which will also involve statisticians from **Zimbabwe** and **Somalia**.
2. **Data production:** Collect and/or analyse TUS data collected with support from UN Women and other partners in **Malawi** and **Zimbabwe**; develop femicide estimates for **Kenya** and **Ethiopia** following the testing of the femicide statistical framework there; provide technical support to the SNBS to improve its administrative crime and GBV statistical systems and expand the production and use of these data to more States; develop various regional reports (the ESA and Ethiopia country gender snapshots; ESA Gender Data Outlook report; ESA consolidated subregional report on Beijing+30 country submissions; WFP food security survey data analysis for **Burundi** and **Djibouti**, etc.); support data collection for a technology-facilitated VAW module for the **Zimbabwe** MICS survey; and support data analysis and the production of a report on the GBV module of the **Ethiopia** DHS.
3. **Data accessibility and use:** Publish the country case study for **Rwanda** to showcase good practices and document lessons in gender data for decision-making and support the development of various gender data stories to raise the profile of gender data as an SDG 5 accelerator; unpack topical gender issues and highlight key moments (e.g., IWD and Beijing +30) for relevant audiences; continue to apply innovative approaches to help strengthen the role of mainstream media as an important ally in promoting gender data uptake and use and curating launch events for knowledge products to popularize data-driven messages and emphasize the use of data to influence decisions and policies; provide training on data visualization for improved communication of gender data for improved access; develop diverse multimedia approaches to strengthen appreciation and use of gender data among key users, such as policymakers; and strengthen linkages with key stakeholders such as civil society and the media from a gender data use perspective.

ⁱ Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, South Sudan and Sudan.

ⁱⁱ For example, on the SDGs, Voluntary National Reviews, Beijing+30 reviews, and periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee.

ⁱⁱⁱ Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

^{iv} The countries included as part of this study represented each sub-region of Africa; Northern Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), Western and central Africa (Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal), eastern Africa (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda), Southern Africa (Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) and Lusophone countries (Mozambique and Cabo Verde).

^v The three-hour morning talk show consists of three distinct segments discussing varied topics; 16 Days made up one segment each for the shows on 18 and 29 November, and on 10 December.

^{vi} National Police Service data.

^{vii} The full analysis is available [here](#) on the UN Women Africa regional website and [here](#) on the global Data Hub.