



IN BRIEF: ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

# MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT

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The Women Count regional project implemented by UN Women’s Asia and the Pacific regional office (UN Women APRO) aims to provide quality, comparable and accessible evidence to inform policy making, project development and implementation, and monitoring and accountability. The regional project contributes to the results of other projects managed by UN Women APRO, including on ending violence against women, strengthening women’s resilience to climate change and natural disasters (EmPower project) and women’s economic empowerment and will facilitate making the case for investing in national and regional initiatives that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. UN Women APRO uses its coordination mandate and takes advantage of its presence in 24 countries in the region and wide network of partners, including governments, multilateral agencies and civil society organizations, to bring actors together to ensure an effective implementation of this initiative.

The Women Count project is guided by a regional assessment conducted in 2017-18 as well as the

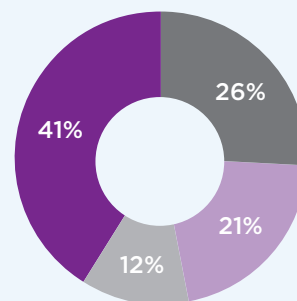
FIGURE 1

## Gender data gaps are pervasive

Proportion of gender-related indicators (85 relevant) by data availability level in Asia-Pacific, 2018

Widely available
  Somewhat available
  Moderately available
  No data

Widely (at least 2/3 of the region), Moderately (at least 1/3) and Somewhat (Less than 1/3)



Source: ADB and UN Women. 2018. Gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Baseline and pathways for transformative change by 2030.

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regional report “*Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Baseline and pathways for transformative change by 2030*” published by UN Women and the Asian Development bank in 2018.

### 1. Creating an enabling environment

The regional assessment found that there is weak policy, legal and financial environments due to limited political will and understanding of the importance of quality gender statistics. Only about a quarter of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region have a law on gender statistics or gender statistics is explicitly covered in a general statistics law. Although many countries have a localized set of SDG indicators, priority gender indicators have not been identified in most countries. As a result, data collection for gender statistics, including sex-disaggregated data, has not been given priority in some countries. In other countries, gender data is collected but not in a timely or comprehensive manner (e.g., ad-hoc surveys or modules), with limited scope for gender analysis and sometimes without the use of internationally agreed definitions and classifications. Notably, the world’s region with the lowest availability of gender data is the Pacific, which lacks data points for more than 50 per cent of the gender-related SDG indicators.



**Women Count response:** Key interventions include working with intergovernmental bodies to improve coordination on gender statistics, including working towards the creation of an

Intergovernmental Group on Statistics on Gender and the Environment; on-demand technical support to countries in the region to localize the SDGs from a gender equality perspective and to select a set of priority gender indicators; engaging with national governments and partners, including the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Pacific Community, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), to establish a roadmap for the production and use of gender data in the Pacific subregion. As co-chairs of the thematic working group on gender equality and empowerment of women and a sub-thematic working group on gender and statistics, UN Women APRO and ESCAP will build upon this existing regional mechanism to improve coordination and implement various activities in partnership with UN agencies, development banks, and inter-governmental organizations.

### 2. Increasing data production

Although most Asia-Pacific countries produce census data every 10 years and survey data more frequently, significant gender data gaps exist in the region, with only 26 per cent of 85 gender relevant SDGs indicators available for more than two-thirds of the countries (see Figure 1). Specialized surveys or modules in important areas, such as time use, are not carried out regularly in most countries in the region, either due to limited financial resources, lack of technical skills or both. Similarly, disaggregation by sex and at multiple levels of these data are not consistently carried out and civil registration and vital statistics remain limited due to lack of sex-disaggregated and missing gender-relevant information in most national registries.



**Women Count response:** Interventions include supporting new surveys in key priority areas such as time use and supporting data reprocessing and analysis, including multi-level disaggregation to monitor the 2030 Agenda’s principle to leave no one behind. In addition, since the region benefits from the existence of several quality training institutions, including the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), joint work on gender statistics curriculum development and training on methodologies will be prioritized.

### 3. Improving data accessibility and use

The data dissemination and communication capacities of national statistical systems are often limited, as is the ability of governments, women’s machinery and other stakeholders to utilize and advocate for gender statistics to inform decisions, research, advocacy, policies and programmes.



**Women Count response:** Enhanced dialogue between producers and users of data, including government, academic institutions, the media and civil society, has been identified as crucial in this regard, and efforts will be focused towards promoting both dialogue and data use. In addition, training will be delivered to data producers to enable seamless data exchanges and thus enhance dissemination and to build their communication skills. Given that other development partners are already working

in Asia-Pacific towards a better dissemination and use of SDG statistics, UN Women will work with these partners to leverage synergies, including with ESCAP's policy-data integration project and with UNSD's project to promote the use of SDMX, and ensure that gender statistics are fully mainstreamed throughout these initiatives.

## Key achievements in 2018

- UN Women gained official membership to all the thematic workstreams of ESCAP's Committee on Statistics. This means that UN Women attends and provides inputs to the work of all these workstreams and is able to mainstream gender across other areas of statistics. Results in some of these areas, such as improving gender and disaster statistics, are already starting to materialize, as UN Women and ESCAP are jointly developing new methodologies by using data integration techniques and geospatial analysis to assess disaster risk from a gender perspective.
- A sub-group on gender statistics training was established under UN SIAP's Network for Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific. Under the proposal endorsed by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, the sub-group provides a space for South-South cooperation and knowledge sharing in Asia-Pacific and is tasked with enhancing the availability and quality of gender statistics, including through the design of training to produce gender data in areas of particular relevance for the region.
- The gender data production and dissemination skills of 200 national statisticians and data users were enhanced through a series of trainings. This was achieved through design and implementation of a training module on multi-level disaggregation and multiple deprivation (in partnership with SIAP), two national trainings in Nepal and China on gender statistics more broadly, and a regional training on the use of SDMX for gender data and metadata exchanges in partnership with the UN Statistics Division. As a result of these training initiatives, some of the participants are already using these skills to produce and disseminate gender data in their own countries. For instance, Fiji requested for technical support from UN Women on how to conduct multi-level disaggregation and to prepare national factsheets on gender statistics.

FIGURE 2

## Measuring Progress in 2018



Significant progress was made in Asia and the Pacific as a result of forging a strategic partnership with UNESCAP and successfully establishing inter-governmental coordination mechanisms on statistics.

## Plans for 2019

In 2019, the Women Count Asia-Pacific regional project will focus on furthering the work and activities of some of the groups and mechanisms established in 2018, continuing support for the implementation of the project in pathfinder countries (Nepal and Bangladesh) and beginning work on a new set of activities, including:

### Enabling environment

- Leading efforts to establish a Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics to promote the coordinated production and use of gender data across the subregion;
- Conducting a Needs Assessment survey, developing two repositories (training resources and experts on gender statistics), and further developing a regional Training Curriculum on Gender through the Sub-group on Gender Statistics Training;
- Organizing at least one expert group meeting on gender and environment statistics, as a first step towards the full establishment of the Inter-governmental Group.

### Data production

- Organizing, jointly with UNSD, ESCAP, WHO, UNESCO and ADB, an international workshop on SDG data disaggregation and help prepare a booklet with data-disaggregation guidelines;

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- Finalizing data analysis jointly with ESCAP, on data integration for gender-related disaster-risk assessment;
  - Commencing a partnership with the International Labour Organization for the finalization of methodological development and roll out of Light Modules on 'time use' in select Asia-Pacific countries;
  - Providing hands-on support to select countries in the region for gender data reprocessing with multi-level disaggregation to produce estimates that speak to the promise of Leaving No One Behind.
  - Organizing advocacy events to communicate the importance of using gender data for decision-making, such as a side event in the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development co-organized with Individual Deprivation Measures and the Government of the Philippines;
  - Organizing and facilitating a regional event on Communicating Gender Data Efficiently, jointly with ESCAP, on building gender data stories and social media, visualizing data and preparing data-driven publications.

#### **Data accessibility and use**

- Rolling out the "Using gender data" series, a series of events co-organized with national universities and statistical offices to teach university students what gender data is, where to find it, how to analyse it and how to create data dissemination/communication products;