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OVERVIEW: WOMEN COUNT PHASE II MOROCCO

The issue

Since 2018, the Women Count programme has achieved significant results in Morocco. Yet at the beginning of Phase II, significant challenges remained, including:

- Morocco's fragmented statistical system lacked coordination, as several institutions oversee the production of gender-disaggregated statistics and sensitive data. This lack of a legal framework and a clear national strategy for the development of gender-sensitive statistics was hindering progress on gender statistics in Morocco.
- Gender statistics users and producers lacked skills and human resources, while vocational training and capacity-building remained limited.
- Irregular production of gender data, including on violence against women (VAW) and women's economic empowerment (WEE), hindered the bridging of important data gaps, the understanding of critical gender inequality issues and the monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- There were limited communication, knowledge-management and knowledge-sharing channels for data producers and users to exchange, connect and learn from one another. There was also limited access to regional gender statistics, as the regional statistical

system was disparate and fragmented, and large statistical gaps at regional, provincial and local/communal levels needed to be addressed.

Our response

- **Create an enabling environment:** Raised awareness and fostered better communication within the national statistical system (NSS) to support revision of the National Statistics Law; enhanced South-South knowledge-exchange by sharing best practices at national and regional workshops and national conferences to disseminate opportune gender statistics to fuel ongoing debate; continued developing tools and guidelines; and kept training national and regional data users and producers.
- **Increase data production:** Supported the High Commission for Planning (HCP) on a time-use survey (TUS), from design through data collection, analysis and dissemination; prioritized gender statistics methodologies and shared international best practices; and organized regional workshops and civil society consultations to ensure that data and survey results guided public policies and strategies in Morocco.
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** Increased coordination and institutionalized user-producer dialogues, notably by organizing national and regional debates for civil society organizations (CSOs) on unpaid work, gender and social norms, VAW and WEE; produced research papers on structural transformations, economic policies and women's economic status in Morocco; and produced and disseminated infographics and user-friendly products (online platforms, animated videos, etc.).

Key results

Creating an enabling environment

- **Coordination and inclusion have been strengthened across the NSS through participatory approaches in the production of large-scale national surveys and by improving gender equality monitoring.** Building on earlier Women Count support, HCP continued institutionalizing consultation mechanisms with diverse stakeholders prior to major statistical operations. This approach was reflected in preparatory consultations conducted ahead of the National Family Survey, following prior programme support to integrate gender considerations into the survey questionnaire. This included adding a dedicated module on the *Moudawana*, or the Moroccan Family Code (which has been under discussion for revision since 2023). Such practices contribute to improving the relevance, inclusiveness and policy utility of national data collection processes. In 2024, UN Women also organized a consultative workshop on Morocco's first *National Gender Equality Composite Index* to further multi-stakeholder engagement. According to participant Zineb Bouba, Head of the Economic and Financial Report and Gender Budget Report Department: *"this collective and participatory exercise initiated to design a multidimensional index for gender equality is a commendable and highly useful exercise for all stakeholders involved and committed to promoting gender equality in Morocco. Given the diversity of the dimensions it covers, this index is a springboard for consolidating the relevance and effectiveness of public action to reduce inequalities between women and men."* Also in 2024, 32 users and producers of Statistics from the Agadir region, including CSOs and academics, took part in a multi-stakeholder dialogue promoting engagement with governments on gender equality and SDG monitoring. Hanane Houchimi, Regional Director for HCP in Agadir, confirmed that *"a genuine space for exchange and mutual learning, indeed a network of gender statistics ambassadors, has been set up in our region to put these achievements into practice and initiate concrete actions, with a view to generating a tangible and lasting impact on the ground."*

- **In Phase II, a total of 135 NSS actors enhanced their expertise on gender-sensitive statistical methodologies and analysis through a series of targeted trainings and technical exchanges.** Women Count has prioritized equipping national partners in Morocco with the technical skills and analytical tools needed to sustainably integrate gender perspectives into statistical production and analysis. Moreover, the increasing demand expressed by national partners, particularly the HCP, for technical assistance and capacity-building reflects the growing recognition of the importance of systematically integrating gender perspectives into statistical production and analysis. Redouane Chab, a sociologist at the Observatory of Living Conditions of the Population, who participated in a 2024 training on the National Family Survey questionnaire, highlighted its transformative nature: *“This support was highly structuring for our practices in several ways. We moved from a largely descriptive approach, focused mainly on binary variables, such as the respondent’s sex, to a genuine integration of gender analysis already at the questionnaire design stage. This shift made it possible to better capture intra-household power relations and the underlying social norms. Several sections of the National Family Survey questionnaire were revised accordingly.”* These methodological advances are now fully embedded in the Observatory’s routine statistical production and are no longer considered optional, but a core quality standard.
 - In 2025, 33 people were reached through capacity-building, including 18 executives from the Directorate of Studies and Financial Forecasts (DEPF), who were trained on the intersection between big data and gender analysis. This contributed to expanding national capacities to leverage innovative data sources for gender-responsive policy analysis. DEPF participants in the training said the development and exploration of use cases contributed to strengthening their analytical capacities in applying a gender lens to the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, including within the Directorate’s broader work on the macro-critical dimensions of gender equality. According to two DEPF executives, Zineb Bouba and Brahim Hassnaoui, the design of an integrated intervention framework, based on the use of non-conventional data sources and innovative data analysis techniques, constitutes an important lever for promoting women’s economic inclusion. They said such an approach would notably enable Morocco to reduce the economic growth losses associated with persistent gender inequalities in the labour market. This reflects a growing institutional convergence around the use of innovative and collaborative data approaches to better inform gender-sensitive policymaking. The enhanced DEPF skills on the use of innovative analytical approaches are expected to support a more robust integration of gender considerations into existing analytical products, including the Results-Based Budgeting Report with a gender perspective accompanying the Finance Bill, thereby reinforcing the quality and depth of evidence available to inform public decision-making.
 - Capacity-building in 2025 also included technical missions and knowledge-exchange opportunities with international experts, such as a study visit to the National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) in Paris. This visit enabled eight HCP executives to strengthen their expertise in advanced demographic and gender-sensitive analytical methods, laying the groundwork for integrating Morocco into the European Generations and Gender Programme, and for a forthcoming partnership with INED to exploit the results of the National Family Survey. Insights from INED and the Directorate for Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics, particularly the presentation of the French *Social Barometer*, inspired HCP to develop a similar analytical tool in Morocco (expected in 2027), which will complement the upcoming time-use survey and support evidence-based policy analysis. According to senior HCP executive Hasnae Fdhil, these exchanges: *“helped teams systematically benchmark against international standards, adopt best practices and collaborate more effectively across institutions, contributing to a stronger culture of evidence-based, gender-sensitive policymaking.”* The mission also supported the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies’ participation in HCP’s 2025 World Statistics Day event, highlighting the benefits

of cross-country collaboration for methodological innovation and capacity-building. Prior supported HCP missions included participation in statistical conferences in Canada and South Africa in 2023 and dedicated trainings in Canada and in 2024.

- In addition, seven HCP executives participated in a training organized in 2025 as part of the study on the assessment of the informal economy in Morocco and its gendered implications. The training strengthened institutional capacities in macroeconomic modelling of informality, particularly through dynamic growth models and overlapping generations frameworks. Participants enhanced their technical skills and deepened their understanding of the interactions between informality, employment, pensions, demographic change and public policy. This contributed to strengthening an integrated analytical approach to inform the design of pro-formality policies that are sustainable and more responsive to gender dynamics in the labour market.
- **During Phase II, cooperation within the NSS was strengthened through the formalization of a Joint Declaration of Commitment between HCP and the United Nations Country Team, signed in 2025, establishing a strategic framework for collaboration on data and gender statistics.** Anchored in the priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and Morocco's New Development Model, this commitment reflects a shared vision to enhance the availability, quality and use of development data to support evidence-based policymaking and SDG monitoring. The Declaration specifically aims to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, build institutional capacities within HCP, promote the integration of SDG indicators into national planning processes, and enhance data dissemination among institutional stakeholders and civil society to foster greater uptake and use. As such, it represents a key step towards institutionalizing coordination and reinforcing the role of gender-sensitive statistics within national development monitoring frameworks. According to Youssef Bouallala, from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office: *"The collaboration with the HCP, particularly through the Joint Declaration of Commitment, represents a key step forward in enhancing the production, quality and use of data for SDG monitoring. The UN's added value lies in mobilizing complementary expertise, harmonizing approaches and mainstreaming gender across statistical systems and public policies. Moving forward, there is a strong opportunity to further develop integrated joint actions, as illustrated by recent analyses such as recent work on profiling youth NEET, which underscore the importance of coordinated and operational use of gender data to inform policy responses."*

Increasing data production

- **The production and availability of gender-sensitive SDG indicators¹ in Morocco have increased.** At the start of Phase II in 2022, around 66% of gender-related SDG indicators were available for monitoring, with key gaps in areas such as women's labour market participation, representation in decision-making and the gender pay gap. Through methodological improvements, the development of the National Gender Equality Composite Index, and the integration of new data sources, Morocco can now track 74% of indicators, including many that were previously unavailable, enhancing both the scope and granularity of gender-disaggregated data. In particular, new indicators developed with UN Women's support include the SDG 5.a.1a and 5.a.1b, measuring women's access to land ownership and use rights in agriculture, as well as the three elementary and composite indicators under SDG 5.6.1, assessing women's autonomy in reproductive health decisions, including the ability to make choices regarding health, contraception, and sexual relations. These data, derived from national agricultural surveys and the 2019 Household

¹ UN Women is completing a broader review and update of its methodology for calculating SDG data availability for gender-specific indicators, including to better align with the UNSD data availability methodology. Therefore, estimates for 2026 are not available. Updates on the revised methodology, when available, will be posted on the UN Women Data Hub.

Living Standards Survey, provide concrete measures of gender inequalities, enabling evidence-based policymaking, targeted interventions and improved monitoring of SDG 5.

- **The Women Count programme in Morocco contributed to strengthening the production of gender statistics by supporting methodological improvements and the development of innovative data analysis approaches.** A key contribution was technical support to HCP over several years to strengthen the upcoming national Time-Use Survey (TUS) in line with international standards. Two technical consultations were conducted to support this process, the recommendations of which were incorporated into the draft questionnaire for the TUS. This represents an important step towards addressing long-standing gender data gaps related to unpaid work and the care economy, which remain central to understanding women's economic participation in Morocco. Fatima Bakass, Sociodemographic Statistician at the National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics, highlighted that despite the significant contribution of rural women to Morocco's economy, they continue to face major deficits across key social dimensions, including education, access to decent employment, financial inclusion and health services. She emphasized that the upcoming TUS will be critical to generating detailed evidence on the overlap between primary and simultaneous activities – particularly the often-invisible combination of paid and unpaid work carried out by women – and to quantifying these contributions more accurately. Such data, she noted, will be essential to making women's work more visible and informing policies that better recognize and address structural inequalities. In addition, Women Count has promoted the use of innovative data approaches to address gender data gaps. In collaboration with national partners, three pilot applications exploring the use of big data for gender analysis and SDG monitoring demonstrated how non-conventional data sources can complement traditional statistical sources and generate new insights on gender-related issues by enhancing the relevance, granularity and timeliness of gender-sensitive indicators. DEPF staff highlighted that the three applications are particularly useful for improving the monitoring of women's access to information and communication technologies, as well as to services and infrastructure that enable access to employment and economic opportunities, noting that these tools can help better identify regional disparities, pinpoint priority intervention areas and support more targeted public policy design. They are also seen as offering added value in capturing dimensions that are difficult to measure through traditional surveys, including actual digital engagement, access to childcare services and mobility-related constraints.
- **The production of analytical research has strengthened the evidence base for gender-responsive policymaking.** UN Women supported four strategic WEE studies² that are expected to have a significant impact on the development of gender equality policies in the economic domain. National institutions, including the HCP and the DEPF, were actively involved in the development, validation and application of these studies. Ikbal Sayeh, Director of Studies at the National Observatory for Human Development, noted that the study on [economic and social opportunity costs](#) of rural women's empowerment was of paramount importance in capturing gender and territorial disparities. He said: *"the findings helped reinforce attention to the nexus between poverty, rural women's vulnerabilities and unequal access to education, health and employment, while pointing to the need for integrated policy responses to accelerate progress on the SDGs."* UN Women supported a [national satellite account synthesis report](#) analysing insights from past time-use surveys and promoting family-friendly policies and the redistribution of care responsibilities. This was used to spur national dialogue and discussion on the care economy at a national conference. According to Hasnae Fdhil, Head of International Cooperation and Communications at HCP: *"This work contributed to elevating and structuring national discussions on the care economy during a dedicated national conference, at a moment when this agenda was gaining increasing policy attention in Morocco. The exercise helped lay*

² This includes a study on [interconnections between violence against women and children and socioeconomic disparities](#), on [women in Morocco's informal economy](#) and a policy paper on [Towards Inclusive Development In Morocco – Policy Pathways for Enhancing Women's Economic Participation](#)"

important analytical foundations for a better understanding of unpaid care work and its role in shaping labour market outcomes and social policy debates.”

Improving data use

- **Data and related analytical work continued to inform public debate and policy reflection.** UN Women disseminated, in print and online, the findings of the four aforementioned WEE studies at a national conference in March 2025, entitled “Empowering Women in Morocco: Understanding the Challenges for Better Action.” The event convened 120 high-level stakeholders from government, civil society, academia and the NSS, providing a platform to present and disseminate research and analytical outputs produced through the programme, including on WEE, gender inequalities and violence against children. The conference facilitated rich exchanges between data producers and users, reinforcing the relevance of gender statistics for policymaking and advocacy. By highlighting structural and societal barriers to women’s participation in the labour market – particularly for rural women – the event promoted the uptake of evidence into discussions on national strategies and informed policy debates related to SDG 5 indicators, including 5.1 and 5.6. Nouzha Skalli, former Minister of Social Development, Family and Solidarity, and current president of the AWAL Think-Tank, emphasized the importance of *“sex-disaggregated data, on how many women and men benefit or not from a given programme, what are the effects of public policies on women and men, so as to have a gender lens that allows the establishment of mechanisms to fight discrimination, reduce inequalities and to have a more relevant response to such matters.”* Skalli also stressed that economic empowerment cannot be dissociated from women’s voice and leadership, particularly given that the research revealed that only 5% of communes in Morocco are currently led by women. The conference discussions underscored the need for targeted interventions that address the specific needs of women and the importance of evidence-based policymaking on WEE. They also sparked debate on how data can be used to influence public policies. The studies’ results are expected to have a significant impact on ongoing debates and the development of policies that foster gender equality in the economic domain.
- **Women Count contributed to institutionalizing user-producer dialogues, fostering sustainable partnerships.** The March 2025 conference served as a concrete opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of collaborative exchanges, encouraging the formalization of consultation practices that were piloted in previous surveys, such as the preparatory consultations for the National Family Survey. These dialogues have created avenues for continuous engagement between the HCP, DEPF, CSOs and other stakeholders, including technical consultations on survey design, thematic workshops with civil society and academia, inter-ministerial coordination meetings and joint methodological reviews, ensuring that the production and use of gender statistics is aligned with national priorities and policy needs. Among others, Klaus Bislev Pedersen, Counsellor on evidence-based policymaking at the Danish Embassy in Morocco, expressed interest in working with the HCP and UN Women on promoting the nexus between gender-sensitive statistics and “gender alignment” with relevant stakeholders. At regional and international levels, the programme also continued supporting Morocco’s engagement in knowledge-sharing platforms on gender statistics. At the same time, Women Count actively contributed to the regional Community of Practice on gender statistics, including work advancing a new study on National Transfer Accounts and National Time Transfer Accounts. This research aims to generate deeper insights into the valuation of unpaid care and domestic work in Morocco and is expected to contribute to ongoing regional discussions on integrating unpaid work into economic analysis and policymaking. Looking ahead, HCP has reaffirmed its commitment to further institutionalize user-producer dialogues, as reflected in its design of a prospective EU-funded programme on territorialized gender-sensitive statistics, which will support structured dialogue between data users and producers while strengthening the production and analysis of gender-sensitive data for improved SDG monitoring and evidence-based decision-making.

- **Women Count knowledge products and data platforms improved access to and usability of gender data.** Data produced were widely disseminated through the [Moroccan Gender Statistics Portal](#). In addition to its dissemination on the portal, the aforementioned research presented at the conference was amplified by the production and dissemination of user-friendly [animated videos](#), a [leaflet](#) and [infographics](#) to strengthen advocacy on improved data production and policy use. By connecting analytical research with advocacy and policy engagement, these platforms and products have strengthened the evidence base for informed policy interventions and contributed to Morocco's reporting on national and international commitments. Media coverage of the conference and research by at least 14 major new outlets further amplified the visibility of these findings nationally, ensuring that they reached broader audiences beyond immediate stakeholders and enhancing their potential to inform future policymaking.

Future plans

UN Women Morocco will continue supporting the country in consolidating the progress made in producing, analysing and using gender-sensitive statistics. Building on the achievements of Women Count Phase I and Phase II, future efforts will focus on sustaining and scaling up national capacities, ensuring that gender data continue to inform policies, programmes and development strategies. Specific interventions will include:

- Supporting the design, implementation and analysis of national sociodemographic surveys, with gender fully integrated across all phases of data production, analysis and dissemination
- Developing advanced analytical outputs and specialized research to inform evidence-based policymaking on WEE, unpaid care work and broader gender equality issues.
- Leveraging knowledge-sharing platforms and South-South exchanges to support Morocco in adopting innovative approaches, methodologies and data sources – including big data, geospatial data and time-use surveys – to address emerging gender data gaps and enhance monitoring of the SDGs.
- Supporting the HCP in strengthening its dissemination strategy, ensuring that gender statistics reach relevant decision-makers, researchers and civil society actors.