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## OVERVIEW: WOMEN COUNT PHASE II ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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### The issue

Since 2019, Women Count has supported countries in the Asia-Pacific region to produce and use quality gender data. Despite significant progress in Phase I, gaps remained in areas of key policy relevance:

- Data to inform gender-sensitive environmental policies were very scarce, yet crucial, considering the region's extreme vulnerability to disasters, the devastating consequences of climate change, sea-level rise and the disproportionate dependence of women on climate-sensitive sectors as a main source of income.
- Similarly, data on women's care work, both paid and unpaid, are critical for women's economic empowerment (WEE), were still not available in every country. This became even more palpable amid the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple climate-related hazards that have worsened women's burdens.
- Given the region's high Internet and mobile phone penetration, there is enormous potential for the use of non-conventional data sources to fill important data gaps. Despite countries' interest, there was a dearth of capacity to produce gender statistics using sources such as big data.
- The use of data for evidence-based decision-making was still not consistent across the region. Investments were needed to enhance access, understanding and the capacity of policymakers to use gender statistics.

## Our response

- **Create an enabling environment:** UN Women supported the mainstreaming of gender statistics across all workstreams of the Asia-Pacific Committee on Statistics; strengthened subregional coordination mechanisms in the Pacific, in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Secretariat; and bolstered the capacities of data users and producers, together with the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and UN Women Knowledge and Partnership Centre in the Republic of Korea (the Centre).
- **Increase data production:** UN Women supported six national statistical offices (NSOs) to develop and implement new gender and the environment surveys, and consultations with Indigenous Peoples for inclusive gender environment data; supported NSOs to use non-conventional sources to fill gender data gaps; reprocessed data to generate Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) estimates disaggregated at multiple levels; and produced time-use data and measured the value of care work, including through national accounting systems.
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** UN Women provided technical and financial support to countries to improve the regular dissemination and communication of gender statistics through demand-driven and user-friendly publications and tools; disseminated timely evidence and knowledge on relevant topics through thematic reports and interactive tools following surveys or data reprocessing exercises; promoted data use for policy design and monitoring, including to track national efforts towards global commitments, such as the SDGs and the many environmental conventions.

## Where we work

**27**  
countries

including two subregions of the Pacific (covering 14 Pacific Island countries with a special focus on Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga), and Southeast Asia (covering 11 countries, with a focus on Cambodia), in addition to Mongolia and a full country project in Bangladesh.

## Key Results

### *Creating an enabling environment*

- **A stronger regional coordination architecture for gender statistics drove sustained, coordinated demand for and support to high-quality policy-relevant gender data.** In South-East Asia, UN Women's partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States drove the establishment of the first ASEAN-UN Women Joint Programme on Gender Statistics under the ASEAN Technical Working Group on SDG Indicators. Since early 2025, this has institutionalized collaboration among ASEAN Member States to identify and address shared capacity gaps on priority areas, including the gender-environment nexus and technology-facilitated violence against women (TF VAW). As co-chairs, UN Women and the ASEAN Secretariat provide technical leadership and coordination stewardship to drive its implementation. In the Pacific, high-level political endorsement of the [Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics](#) by the [Heads of Planning and Statistics](#) in the Pacific continued to guide national ownership and implementation, with countries such as Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga producing and using gender statistics in line with agreed regional priorities (see section II). In line with the Roadmap, Fiji and Vanuatu are now planning to develop national gender statistics roadmaps. According to

Autiko Tawaketini, Principal Statistician, Methodology Unit at the Fiji Bureau of Statistics, *“the Pacific Roadmap provides a guide for Fiji on how to carry out the process in order to develop the gender statistics framework. And the beauty of the Pacific Roadmap is that it is holistic, and it provides a clear pathway for Fiji in terms of stakeholder engagement, consultation processes, and other areas that we will need to do ... to ensure that what we do is of quality and not just a tick-the-box activity.”* With support from UN Women and the SPC, the Pacific Gender Statistics Coordination Group – representing statistical offices and other relevant institutions – coordinated and oversaw regional initiatives, including the Pacific Roadmap endorsement in 2023 and launching of the first [Pacific Gender Outlook](#) in 2025.

- **UN Women’s technical expertise informed more gender-responsive global statistical standards on climate and the environment.** Tools produced by UN Women and partners – including the [Gender and Environment Survey model questionnaire](#), [enumerator manual](#), [sampling guidelines](#) and the [set of 100 Gender-Environment Indicators](#), and Metadata (publication forthcoming) – now provide a coherent, end-to-end methodology for measuring the gender-environment nexus. With UN Women’s support, countries’ implementation of these tools throughout Phase II (see subsection II on data production) pioneered a growing body of regional expertise harnessed globally. Through the UN Expert Group on Environment and Climate Change Statistics, UN Women’s technical contributions, advocacy and methodological tools strengthened the [global repository](#) of climate change questions for censuses and surveys, including gender-specific questions and sampling guidance; the repository is expected to result in an agreed core set of climate change and environment questions endorsed by the Statistical Commission. They also influenced emerging global frameworks, including the [Belém Indicators adopted](#) at COP30 (2025) to track progress under the Global Goal on Adaptation under the Paris Agreement. Importantly, contributions were made alongside national governments, such as **Cambodia** and **Tonga** sharing first-hand experience and amplifying Asia-Pacific voices to advocate for gender data and their use for climate and environmental policy at key global convenings – [COP28](#) (2023) and the UN [Global Forum on Gender Statistics](#) (2025). Tonga’s Minister of Finance, Tiofilusi Tiueti, shared: *“I see the value of gender and environment data, because without it, we are operating in the dark. ... If Tonga, with its remote location and limited human and financial resources for data collection, managed to roll out this survey, so can all of you... I hereby respond to your call to action, by committing to making the most of this data; committing to working with other members of the Tonga Government to examine the issues raised by the survey data in detail, and putting in place policy responses that will benefit the women and men in Tonga, our environment, and our islands.”*
- **Around 1,500 data producers and users strengthened their skills in collecting, analysing and using gender statistics and are applying them in their daily work, inspiring statisticians, journalists and policymakers around the world.** This included 744 users and producers in 2025 alone. Capacity-building was demand-driven, spanning a wide range of topics – such as gender and environment statistics, big data methods, improving SDG monitoring from a gender perspective, and promoting data use for reporting and decision-making. As a result, several governments successfully implemented their first-ever national gender-environment survey (Cambodia, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga); identified gender and climate priority indicators and produced disaggregated estimates using available data (Fiji); developed gender-responsive Voluntary National Reviews (Bangladesh), informed national climate plans (see section III on data uses), and built nation-wide capacity on gender statistics production and use. The UN Women-SIAP [Gender Statistics Training Curriculum](#), updated in 2024 with new modules on big data, communications and statistical leadership, has been adopted autonomously by academic and government institutions in Albania, Bangladesh, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Philippines and Republic of Korea, reaching students, journalists and government officials beyond UN Women’s reach (see Impact story 1). UN Women also supported capacity-building of Mongolia NSO staff in 2025 to assess and ensure the quality of its first upcoming census integrating administrative register data.

Participants from the Research and Sampling Division, the Business Register and Census Division and the Population and Housing Census Division reported feeling comfortable applying what they learned in their work or even teaching the concepts to others (7/10). Anonymous feedback included: *“This training was so good. I understood [so] many things that [I] use [in] my work and I learned about the process of assessment of quality.”*; *“It has become clearer that improving the legal framework is of utmost importance because ensuring the quality of primary data is essential for the final outcome, accuracy and reality. We have also been able to answer our important questions about quality.”*

### *Increasing data production*

- **More countries in Asia and the Pacific now produce and use gender-environment data, strengthening evidence on how climate change, disasters and environmental degradation affect women and men differently.** During Phase II, five gender and environment surveys (GES) were rolled out with UN Women technical and financial support to: **Tonga** (2022), **Samoa** (2023), **Cambodia** (2024) and **Kiribati** (2025) and technical support to **Bangladesh** (2024–2025) for its upcoming GES. These surveys generated the first nationally representative data on how women and men experience environmental risks, coping with climate change, disasters, natural resource management and environmental conservation. While highlighting widespread exposure to the effects of climate change such as frequent droughts and heat episodes, the findings consistently showed disproportionate effects on women’s health, livelihoods and unpaid care work. [Cambodia’s GES](#) revealed women are more likely than men to report their physical health being affected (48 vs. 45%); reduce their food intake to cope with changing climate conditions (12 vs. 9%) and spend even more time caring for family members (31 vs. 28%). Earlier data from [Tonga’s GES](#) similarly showed that women were more affected than men by mental health issues (37 vs. 34%); decreased food consumption (14 vs. 11%); and increased unpaid care burdens (62 vs. 56%). These data provide a critical evidence-base for gender-responsive environmental, disaster preparedness and climate change mitigation policies and strategies (see subsection III on data uses). User-producer dialogues, conducted before and after data collection, ensured alignment with national priorities and strengthened ownership and uptake of findings among government institutions, including for the monitoring of key national global frameworks, such as the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster and Risk Reduction.
- **New evidence on key gender issues, generated through innovative methods, helped fill critical data gaps beyond the reach of household surveys.** Leveraging geospatial data, machine learning and integration of existing household survey data (e.g. Demographic and Health Surveys), UN Women produced [new evidence](#) on the connections between climate change and key gender outcomes – including child marriage, adolescent births, and access to water and clean fuels – across **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Philippines** and **Timor-Leste** in 2023. In the Pacific, [big data from social media were analysed](#) across **Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands** and **Tonga** to better understand the impacts of crises on violence against women (VAW) through help-seeking behaviour in 2023, generating evidence subsequently used to train service-providers to better reach VAW survivors during crises through social media outreach. After attending this training, healthcare worker and SheRo representative Phornsuda Phongnak, from **Thailand**, shared messages about how online harassment affects mental health and created an infographic about how survivors can take down photos or accounts, if attacked. *“We’ve been trying to bridge the information gap and reach out to different types of survivors, who may be experiencing online harassment or TF GBV and hoping they see our infographics and other online outreach to improve how they access services,”* she said. A 2024 [gender and biodiversity data brief](#) generated the first-ever global evidence on how habitat loss and ecosystem degradation affect women’s subsistence, care burdens, food security and income across regions, contributing to [evidence-based advocacy](#) for gender-responsive action and data at the COP16 on Biodiversity and Desertification, together with Women4Biodiversity, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Women’s Caucus. In partnership with the United Nations Office of the High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women leveraged administrative data sources to generate [evidence on women with disabilities](#) in displacement in Myanmar in 2024, revealing heightened socioeconomic vulnerability compared to men – including higher rates of no education (55% of women vs. 50% of men with disabilities) – as well as the disproportionate care burdens borne by women living with or caring for people with disabilities. Lastly, scenario modelling in 2023 with the [Pardee Center for International Futures projected the gendered effects of climate change](#) on poverty, productivity and food security across Indonesia, Kiribati, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga under different investment scenarios gave policymakers first-time access to forward-looking gender-disaggregated projections (see online [tool](#)).

- **Strengthened gender data availability has improved SDG monitoring across the region.** The second [ASEAN Gender Outlook](#) (2024), produced in close collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, with contributions and guidance from ASEAN Member States, generated estimates for over 100 indicators on the status of women and girls across all 17 SDGs for 10 ASEAN Member States. Launched globally at the [79th session of the UN General Assembly](#), it was subsequently cited in regional media. In 2025, the first-ever [Pacific Gender Outlook](#), produced jointly with SPC and in consultation with national statistical offices across the Pacific – who reviewed key messages, validated data sources and contributed country-level estimates – generated disaggregated SDG estimates for 14 Pacific countries and territories, many for the first time. Together, these Outlooks provide crucial regional estimates of progress across all 17 SDGs from a gender perspective, strengthening the evidence base for regional gender-responsive policy and accountability. At the national level, Fiji's Bureau of Statistics – with UN Women and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) support – produced the country's first-ever [Gender and Climate Change Nexus Data Brief](#) (2025), generating sex-disaggregated estimates for SDG 7.1.2 on clean cooking fuel access. Findings revealed more than half of women (53.1%) rely on unclean cooking fuels such as firewood and kerosene – a burden concentrated among rural women, where clean fuels remain largely out of reach. These data are [key to support Fiji's aim to transition](#) the country towards a net-zero emissions economy by 2050.

### *Improving data use*

- **Three countries in Asia-Pacific leveraged gender statistics for climate action plans that better meet the needs of women and girls.** The new [Cambodia Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\)](#) integrates gender equality throughout, including a dedicated chapter tailored to women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities. Data from Cambodia's [Gender Environment Survey \(GES\)](#) – led by the National Institute of Statistics with UN Women support and [launched in 2025](#) – were used to shape realistic yet ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures. UN Women also supported national dialogues between data users and producers, strengthening stakeholders' capacities to apply GES data for evidence-based and gender-responsive policy- and decision-making (see Impact story 7). In the Pacific, the [Tonga NDC 3.0](#) includes a dedicated chapter on gender equality and social inclusion and references evidence from the [Tonga GES](#). In 2025, UN Women supported the integration of gender evidence into the NDC through technical inputs, collaboration with the field office, and facilitation of national data user-producer dialogues to strengthen cooperation and capacity to leverage GES data. In Samoa, UN Women worked with the Ministry of Women to mainstream gender across the [NDC](#), providing technical support to leverage the [Samoa GES](#) data. Beyond the NDCs, Tonga's GES findings continued to inform a broader [policymaking and accountability](#) processes. The Tonga Statistics Department (TSD) and the National Disaster Risk Management Office used GES data to showcase the importance of gender data in informing DRR and climate action at the 2024 [Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction](#), and subsequently in 2025 for reporting on the Gender Action Plan to Support Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Government

stakeholders also referenced the GES as a critical evidence base to guide the revision of the National Gender Policy (2019–2025), strengthening its new Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga Policy ([WEGET III 2026–2030](#)) launched on International Women’s Day 2026. Its Outcome 5 explicitly focuses on women’s resilience to climate change and disasters. Together with TSD, UN Women supported a three-day [national user-producer dialogue](#) in August 2025, bringing together government ministries, technical departments and civil society to build capacity for integrating GES findings into relevant policy frameworks.

- **Over 40 regional gender data products reached policymakers and civil society at the highest levels, driving evidence-based gender advocacy.** The [ASEAN Gender Outlook 2024](#), launched at the [79th session of the UN General Assembly](#), drew [ministerial-level endorsements](#) from Australia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Thailand – with Australia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs noting that the *Outlook* “*provides essential data to inform regional policy.*” It was subsequently rolled out at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta in 2025, where ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn [underscored its importance to the region’s gender equality agenda](#): “*ASEAN remains deeply committed to advancing gender equality and empowering women across our diverse region. A cornerstone of this commitment is our emphasis on the systematic collection, rigorous analysis and strategic utilization of gender data and statistics to inform evidence-based policies and programmes.*” The first-ever [Pacific Gender Outlook](#) (2025) reached 40 senior statistical leaders from more than 22 Pacific Island countries and territories at its launch at the [seventh Pacific Heads of Planning meeting](#), with at least four media outlets – including [RNZ News](#) and [The Fiji Times](#) – covering its findings. And at COP16 on Desertification in 2024, parties made [explicit calls](#) for the use of gender-specific indicators for monitoring progress and assessing the differentiated impact of desertification, land degradation and drought – building on evidence from UN Women’s [gender and biodiversity data brief](#) presented at the Women’s Caucus session.
- **User-producer dialogues built national ownership of gender statistics, sustaining demand for gender statistics.** Throughout Phase II, UN Women supported user-producer dialogues systematically before and after data collection in every GES country – ensuring surveys were designed around national policy priorities and that findings were understood and owned by key decision-makers. In **Cambodia**, 111 data users and producers from 14 ministries, development partners and CSOs identified opportunities and challenges for GES findings to inform inclusive climate and environmental policy- and decision-making at a national dialogue following the national launch, resulting in the aforementioned NDC. In **Kiribati**, preliminary GES findings were presented at a high-level national event in June 2025, which was attended by the President, generating strong interest among national stakeholders, particularly in the context of expanding women’s access to early warning information. In **Vanuatu**, a national user-producer dialogue supported jointly with SPC in 2025 spurred the Government to develop a national road map on gender statistics, initiating national dialogues to identify priority gender indicators and requesting UN Women technical support for its development. And at the regional level, a dialogue supported with ESCAP in 2025 convened 25 data users and producers from 11 countries to build capacity on gender-environment statistics, including through peer learning, inspiring **Bangladesh** to scale up from a planned pilot to a nationally representative GES, and **Thailand** to request UN Women support to strengthen its SDG 5 reporting.

## Plans for Phase III

Women Count Phase III<sup>1</sup> in Asia and the Pacific will build on the foundations of Phase II to scale up gender data production and use in the region, with a stronger focus on emerging data gaps, innovative methods, and closing the distance between evidence and action.

Specific interventions will include:

- Continuing to strengthen regional coordination mechanisms to sustain demand, capacity and collaboration on gender statistics, including for mainstreaming gender through key regional frameworks (e.g. 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent).
- Supporting Pacific Island Countries with further implementing the Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics, including the design and implementation of national roadmaps.
- Scaling up GES implementation in countries with strong national demand (Thailand and Fiji) while promoting the use of existing GES data for environment and climate policy (e.g. environmental and disaster-risk reduction plans) and reporting on relevant frameworks (e.g. SDGs, Sendai Framework, Rio Conventions).
- Advancing methodologies, especially leveraging non-conventional sources like geographic information systems and citizen data to expand data production in emerging priority areas. These span humanitarian gender data, TF VAW, time-use modules in the Pacific, and gender-environment data with a strong leave-no-one-behind focus on Indigenous Peoples and other underrepresented groups, including through strengthening environmental accounting systems.
- Building regional and country capacity for gender statistics priorities, including for leveraging innovative data methods to fill gender statistics gaps.
- Enhance stakeholder access to data and promote its use in national, regional and global decision-making, including through the development of a gender and environment data dashboard and facilitating timely user-producer dialogues to strengthen national ownership and support engagement in relevant intergovernmental processes from an Asia-Pacific perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> Plans for Phase III are still in process of being finalized.