



IN BRIEF

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OVERVIEW: WOMEN COUNT PHASE II BANGLADESH

The issue

Women Count has contributed to significant improvements in how gender data are produced and used in Bangladesh. Despite these gains, persistent challenges remained at the beginning of Phase II, including:

- Transitional political context and the landscape around data distortions and integrity presented challenges for data governance in Bangladesh.
- Limited availability, reliability and accessibility of gender statistics hindered the comprehensive formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, processes and programmes focusing on gender equality.
- Absence of long-term financial commitments from national and international stakeholders impacted the continuity of data-driven initiatives and the ability to scale up successful initiatives.
- Weak coordination mechanisms, and data management and information systems for administrative data at the local/subnational level, posed barriers to the regular collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics, barring the effective monitoring of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Existing capacities and knowledge of key statistical actors on gender data were insufficient for gender data analyses and use of gender statistics to inform policymaking.

Our response

- **Create an enabling environment:** UN Women helped to strengthen gender statistics coordination within the national statistical system (NSS) through technical

support to mainstream gender data in national plans, acts and reform priorities such as amending the Statistics Act 2013; operationalized the Gender Statistics Cell (GSC) to mainstream gender statistics across all wings of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) effectively by embedding gender-responsive elements into the future Labour Force Survey questionnaire; and scaled up training for data users and producers by expanding engagement with stakeholders such as civil society organizations (CSOs) and media.

- **Increase data production:** UN Women supported the BBS to generate data on key areas, such as women's economic empowerment and gender and the environment.
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** UN Women produced and widely disseminated new publications, such as infographics and policy briefs; organized user-producer dialogues to track progress towards gender equality; and extended technical support to Voluntary National Review (VNR) reporting to enhance national monitoring of the SDGs.

Key results

Creating an enabling environment

- **There is now Government commitment to finance and implement a two-year stand-alone gender statistics programme for the first time.** The Bangladesh Planning Commission approved a USD 1.78 million (approximately) gender statistics programme (2026–2028) entitled “*Strengthening Gender Statistics in Bangladesh*” in January 2026. Led by the Gender Statistics Cell (GSC) of BBS, it is the first initiative of its scale to be fully funded by the Government of Bangladesh. This achievement reflects the sustained technical support provided to the GSC and evidence-based advocacy on the importance of financing for gender data under Women Count since Phase I. A key component of the programme is the implementation of a full-time-use survey (TUS). Aligned with the NSDS 2024–2030 and grounded in Women Count evidence, it represents a major step towards strengthening the national gender data ecosystem. It also demonstrates a shift towards sustained domestic financing and reduced dependence on development partners.
- **Gender is now mainstreamed across the upcoming National Statistical Development Strategy (NSDS), marking a significant systems-level shift.** As a result of sustained Women Count advocacy, Bangladesh has, for the first time in over a decade, integrated a dedicated, comprehensive section on gender statistics into its NSDS. The Government of Bangladesh initiated revisions to the 2013 NSDS in 2023 to align it with the national development plan. UN Women successfully leveraged this policy window to ensure gender statistics are fully mainstreamed in the national statistical agenda. The draft NSDS (envisaged to be finalized in 2026) sets out clear and actionable commitments. These aim to strengthen the governance, production and use of gender statistics across the NSS. These commitments include: the regular generation of essential data on violence against women (VAW); measurement of unpaid care and domestic work through upcoming rounds of the time-use survey (TUS) and the household production satellite account; and the adoption of standardized, internationally aligned methodologies. Once finalized, the NSDS will serve as a strategic blueprint until 2030, positioning the NSS to deliver stronger, gender-responsive evidence for policymaking and sustainable development, in line with national priorities and global frameworks, such as the SDGs. This represents a major outcome of Women Count's engagement, establishing a critical institutional entry point for advancing gender statistics to inform policy and decision-making.
- **At least 222 data users and producers now have strengthened capacities to produce and use gender statistics as a result of Women-Count-supported trainings from 2022–2025.** These reached:

- 36 data users and producers – comprising government officials, CSOs and journalists from across Bangladesh – who enhanced their skills on collecting, analysing and using gender statistics during a 4-day national training using the Gender Statistics Curriculum. By the end, 84% showed improved knowledge of gender statistics. As stated by one participant: *“I (have) gained a clearer understanding of how to collect, analyse and visually present gender data. This training has equipped me with the knowledge to transform raw data into impactful reports, and I look forward to sharing these skills with my colleagues.”* This training was organized in February 2025 by BBS and UN Women.
- 171 gender data users and producers from government, the UN, academia and CSOs took part in a 2-day workshop in 2025 to identify data gaps for SDG reporting, with technical support from UN Women and ESCAP. Participants highlighted the lack of adequate reporting on unpaid care work and gender-based violence, emphasizing the need for more detailed and responsive data systems. Their recommendations were shared with relevant government partners involved in preparing the 2025 VNR report.
- a 15-member Thematic Working Group, which strengthened its capacity from 2024–2025 to generate reliable and meaningful gender data through the construction of the Household Production Satellite Account (HPSA), with technical support from UN Women and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- BBS has also used Women Count training materials for a series of different capacity-building activities. According to Asma Akhter, Deputy Director of the Demography and Health Wing of the BBS: *“This has helped build their capacity to understand and apply gender data, strengthened their technical skills and promoted the use of evidence-based approaches to address gender inequalities.”*

Increasing data production

- **Bangladesh produced the country’s first official Household Production Satellite Account, recognizing women’s unpaid care and domestic work and vowing to include it in calculating its gross domestic product (GDP).** For the first time in Bangladesh, the HPSA officially established [the economic value of unpaid care and domestic work](#), generating a critical macroeconomic measure of its scale and contribution to GDP. Using data from the 2021 [Time-Use Survey](#), published in 2023, the [HPSA](#) shows that unpaid care and domestic work contributed BDT 6.7 trillion (USD 78 billion) in 2021, equivalent to 18.9% of GDP. Women accounted for 85% of this contribution. The production of the HPSA helped to cement the Government’s commitment to inform a landmark fiscal year 2025/26 [budget commitment](#) to recognize women’s unpaid care and domestic work and integrate its value into GDP calculations – signalling a [major policy shift](#). The HPSA process was led by the BBS with sustained technical and statistical support from UN Women and the ADB over two years. A dedicated 15-member thematic working group, supported by UN Women and ADB, invested in building the skills and systems needed to generate reliable and meaningful gender data. Their work strengthened national capacity, enabling Bangladesh to sustain and scale progress. In parallel, UN Women’s technical support and advocacy secured the inclusion of TUS and HPSAs as dedicated surveys/tools to be implemented by the BBS, as reflected in the NSDS 2024–2030. Bangladesh positioned itself as a leading global voice when former Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus [highlighted](#) HPSA findings at the 80th United Nations General Assembly. His reaffirmation of Beijing+30 pledges, including recognizing unpaid care work, signaled strong political commitment to gender equality. Now the 36th country to produce official estimates on the value of unpaid care and domestic work, Bangladesh continues to advance this agenda. Plans for a second HPSA by 2027 were also announced at the [Beijing+30 high-level meeting](#). The HPSA strengthens the national evidence base, supports the integration of gender into macroeconomic policy and across the NSS, and advances SDG 5 commitments and its LDC (Least Developed Country) graduation preparations. According

to Asma Akhter, Deputy Director of the Demography and Health Wing of the BBS, as a result of studies like the TUS and HPSA, *“there is now a growing demand from ministries and development partners for sex-disaggregated data and gender-focused analysis”*.

- **SDG gender data availability has increased by 23% since the start of Phase II, strengthening monitoring of gender equality commitments in Bangladeshⁱ.** Gender-related data from existing surveys can now inform around 65% of gender-related SDG indicators in 2025 – including time use – following UN Women’s support, up from 42% in 2022. The TUS was instrumental in establishing the 2021 baseline for SDG indicator 5.4.1 within the national SDG Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and in setting targets for the subsequent nine years. During Phase II (2022–2025), these strengthened data systems were critical for the implementation and follow-up of the 2020 VNR, including tracking progress on national commitments to gender equality and informing more evidence-based, gender-responsive reporting processes leading into the 2025 VNR. The Government of Bangladesh has consistently recognized the importance of robust data for SDG implementation, highlighting the role of increased availability of gender-related indicators in advancing national development and supporting the country’s LDC graduation process.

Improving data use

- **TUS data have shaped advocacy and informed multiple national plans and reporting on international commitments.** TUS data informed the 2023 update of the National Action Plan for the National Women’s Development Policy, with concrete initiatives to improve gender statistics in 48 ministries. This also now specifies that BBS and its Statistics and Informatics Division must conduct a TUS on a regular basis and continue to assess the economic value of unpaid care and domestic work. In addition to their use in the VNR, the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (MoWCA) used TUS data to demonstrate progress and elevate the importance of gender statistics in the 2025 [Beijing+30 Comprehensive National Review Report, with technical support from UN Women](#). This has contributed to stronger national ownership of care-related data and reinforced commitments to strengthen the evidence base on care. TUS data were also used for advocacy across sectors and forums, such as to inform the [Charter of Demand](#) developed by a coalition of CSOs, and to advance discussions on the care economy in the Local Consultative Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality, the primary Government-UN-development partners coordination mechanism, which then prioritized the care economy in its 2024 workplan. In addition, in 2025, the TUS and HPSA data were used in a [national and divisional factsheet](#) jointly produced by MoWCA and the Local Consultative Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality on gender statistics aligned with the SDGs. According to a CSO representative: *“The time-use data is incredibly valuable. We plan to share it during our courtyard meetings so that both women and men can recognize the value of unpaid care work – and begin to see it as a shared responsibility.”*
- **Centring gender data resulted in a gender-responsive Voluntary National Review.** The official submission of the 2025 [VNR](#) report by the Government of Bangladesh reaffirmed its commitment to realize the SDGs. Throughout the preparation process, UN Women provided multilayered technical support, resulting in strengthened coordination between (and the enhanced capacity of) BBS and MoWCA. This included convening two consultations, in which 256 participants from ministries, CSOs, youth organizations, development partners, UN agencies and academia participated in 2024, that informed the drafting of a gender-responsive VNR. The key outcome of the consultations was a set of actionable recommendations on the systematic and timely generation of data on VAW, intersectional gendered analysis to leave no one behind (LNOB), and sustained financing and institutional coordination for gender data production, analysis and dissemination. According to CSO participant Samina Yasmin: *“It is critical to adopt an intersectional feminist approach to producing and using gender data to formulate evidence-based policies from a LNOB lens”*.

- **Eight knowledge products are generating and disseminating knowledge on key gender statistics and driving discourse.** In addition to the aforementioned TUS, HPSA and VNR reports, four companion pieces to the [TUS 2021](#) and [HPSA](#) – namely [summary briefs](#) – were produced and are being distributed at strategic and high-level outreach events to advance discussions and garner commitments on the care economy. At the First Regular session of the UN Women Executive Board in 2026, the Bangladesh Permanent Mission urged strengthening collaboration with UN Women to [advance the care economy](#). This renewed political will to position the care economy as a national priority follows UN Women's advocacy with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in key high-level strategic events. And this impact has been seen in the Government's aforementioned commitment at the 80th UN General Assembly and the high-level Beijing+30 meetings. The 2025 "[Towards Caring Cities](#)" study generated new evidence on the demand and supply of care services in Dhaka. Using geospatial analysis, it is informing policy and financing discussions on the care economy. By illustrating how demographic trends, urban density and environmental risks intersect with the availability of care infrastructure, the study has catalysed a growing discourse on financing for care among stakeholders and donors – including to pilot a care-financing model, leveraging innovative finance to accelerate growth in Bangladesh's care economy.
- **At least 300 data producers and users now understand the importance of gender statistics and have enhanced knowledge on utilizing and communicating gender data.** To move beyond data production and strengthen policy uptake of gender statistics, in particular time-use statistics, UN Women and BBS [convened](#) seven user-producer dialogues across seven divisions of Bangladesh, engaging over 300 stakeholders from government, civil society, academia and media. The [dialogues](#) in Sylhet and Mymensingh highlighted the need to address gender norms and occupational segregation, strengthen institutional data-sharing, and expand recognition of both paid and unpaid care work. These dialogues have also spurred commitment from users and producers alike to raise awareness of the value of gender data to shape programmatic interventions. Further, by linking gender data to decision-making, the dialogues have underscored how investments in statistics can drive more equitable, evidence-based development outcomes. As one local government official participant noted: *"There was a time when women's work at home was seen as doing nothing. We must shift this mindset by recognizing unpaid care work as productive labour and ensuring it is reflected in our data, policies and national planning."*

Future plans

UN Women Bangladesh will continue to support activities to generate gender-related data for informing decision-making to achieve gender equality and women's empowermentⁱⁱ, including by:

- Strengthening capacities of the NSS on production, use and uptake of inclusive gender data through two new products – the Bangladesh Gender and Environment Survey 2025 and VAWG Deep-Dive Survey 2025, to be produced with support from and under the new partnership with the Government of Sweden to the Strategic Note (2022–2027) of UN Women Bangladesh
- Provide technical support to BBS in the conduct, analysis, dissemination and use of gender data initiatives under the newly approved BBS-led "*Strengthening Gender Statistics in Bangladesh*" programme (2026–2028).

ⁱ 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.

ⁱⁱ Plans for Phase III are in the process of being finalized.