

# Addressing Gender Issues through the Production and Use of Gender-Sensitive Information

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## **Abstract**

*It is widely acknowledged that gender is not only a moral issue but also, and more importantly, a development issue. Despite this recognition, insufficient progress has been made in addressing gender issues both nationally and internationally. The lack of reliable gender-sensitive information has been identified as an obstacle to the development of sound policy formulation and decision-making with respect to gender inequalities and the empowerment of women.*

*This paper presents selected measures to help address the challenges facing African countries in the production and use of gender-sensitive information to support development efforts. In doing so, it highlights various aspects of engendering statistical processes and underlines ongoing efforts by African stakeholders in this respect. It argues that data producers should strive to collect, collate, and present statistics on individuals disaggregated by sex as a minimum requirement for gender-sensitive policy formulation, decisionmaking, and monitoring and evaluation of development objectives. It calls for African countries to mainstream gender into National Statistical Systems and for better coordination at the national level, as well as with development partners in ensuring that surveys and censuses are engendered. Partnerships, networking and regular information sharing between stakeholders dealing with gender measurement issues are identified as building blocks for concerted efforts in engendering statistical processes.*

**Key Words:** *Gender statistics, Gender inequalities, Gender mainstreaming, Time-use surveys*

## **Résumé**

*Il est de notoriété publique que le genre est non seulement une question morale mais aussi et de plus en plus considéré comme une question de développement. Malgré cette reconnaissance observée tant au niveaux nationaux qu'international, peu de progrès a été réalisé dans l'intégration des questions sexospécifiques*

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*dans les efforts de développement. Parmi les facteurs contribuant à ce manque de progrès, plusieurs parties prenantes montrent du doigt, à juste titre, le manque de données sexospécifiques.*

*Cet article présente quelques mesures visant à aider les pays africains à s'attaquer aux problèmes relatifs à la production et l'utilisation des statistiques sexospécifiques. Ce faisant, il fait le tour de quelques aspects relatifs à leur intégration dans le processus statistique tout en soulignant les efforts menés présentement par certains intervenants en ce sens. Il argumente que les producteurs des statistiques devraient collecter, traiter, analyser et diffuser les statistiques désagrégées par sexe comme un minimum requis pour assurer la prise de décision basée sur les résultats et le suivi et l'évaluation des objectifs du développement qui tiennent compte des questions sexospécifiques. Il fait un plaidoyer auprès des pays africains pour l'intégration des questions sexospécifiques dans leurs systèmes statistiques nationaux à travers, entre autres, une coordination des efforts tant au niveau national qu'avec les partenaires. Enfin, les partenariats, les réseaux et l'échange continu d'information sont identifiés comme éléments non négligeables pour le maintien des efforts visant à produire et utiliser les statistiques sexospécifiques.*

**Mots clés :** *statistiques sexospécifiques, inégalités sexospécifiques, intégration des questions sexospécifiques, enquêtes sur l'emploi du temps*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the closing decades of the last millennium, the African continent witnessed the emergence of a number of initiatives aimed at improving the social, economic, and political condition of its citizens. These included a number of national, regional, and international development plans such as the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These initiatives form part of what can be considered as Africa's development agenda. In the pursuit of this development agenda, it has been widely recognized that women and men face different socio-economic realities. There is therefore a need to take into account the gender dimension in policy and decisionmaking processes and in monitoring and evaluating the progress made in the development agenda. In fact, gender equality and the empowerment of women are an integral part of the development process, as demonstrated by their inclusion in declarations, commitments and development frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing

Platform for Action, the MDGs, the NEPAD and its gender component, the African Union (AU) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, and the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

There is an increasing recognition among producers and users of statistics that the ability to conduct sound policy- and decisionmaking, planning, program formulation, implementation and monitoring that is gender sensitive is dependent on data that are gender sensitive. Unfortunately, many of the African National Statistical Systems (NSSs) have made little progress in addressing gender issues in the production and use of statistics. This is due to a number of factors, including (i) the lack of capacity to deliver the needed quality and timely gender-sensitive information and (ii) a limited understanding of, and mainstreaming of, gender-related issues and concerns into statistical processes and programs. Therefore, the gender dimension constitutes an additional challenge to already weak and vulnerable African NSSs.

This paper presents selected measures aimed at improving gender mainstreaming into statistical production and processes, given the challenges facing African NSSs in their quest to improve the production and use of gender-sensitive information. The paper is organized as follows. After the introduction, Section 2 defines gender-sensitive data as opposed to sex-disaggregated ones. Section 3 elaborates on why gender-sensitive statistics are critical for development. Section 4 presents an overview of gender statistics challenges in Africa, while Section 5 examines the issue of engendering statistical production processes. Section 6 presents the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) as a good practice in addressing the issue of gender inequalities and empowerment of women. Section 7 underlines ongoing partnerships in addressing issues confronting African NSS in gender statistics. Finally, some conclusions are drawn in Section 8, together with proposals on the way forward.

## **2. WHAT ARE GENDER-SENSITIVE DATA?**

Gender-sensitive data represent more than sex-disaggregated data. “Sex” refers to relatively fixed, biological differences between men and women, while “gender” refers to socially constructed differences between sexes. Unlike gender differences, which can be changed by adopting different attitudes or by any policy implementation, biological differences are by definition fixed and unchangeable. Sex-disaggregated data are those collected

and tabulated separately for women and men, whereas gender-sensitive data are those compiled and analyzed while recognizing that gender-based factors influence women's and men's different social conditions, relations, and access to resources.

In addition to providing a comparison between women and men, gender-sensitive data allow for an analysis of women's and men's participation in and contribution to all social and economic areas; they also allow measurement of the outcomes of women's and men's participation and contribution to the economy. They include data that highlight differences in roles, resources, power, norms and values, in the following areas: program monitoring, results-based monitoring, policy, program and financial accountability, responsibility, transparency, advocacy and lobbying, etc.

Gender-sensitive information on environmental sustainability, for example, should be able to assess the extent to which gender issues are being mainstreamed into programs and policies for the preservation of the environment, and improving access to safe water. Indicators should therefore look into environmental health, water and sanitation, and the impact of air and water pollution and poisonous fumes from factories on women and children's health. They could also examine the extent to which members of the local community, particularly women, participate in the planning and decisionmaking of environmental programs. They should also address the impact of environmental degradation on the availability and use of natural resources by women, and the contribution of integrating gender issues to improving water and sanitation projects.

### **3. WHY ARE GENDER-SENSITIVE STATISTICS CRITICAL FOR DEVELOPMENT?**

Gender equality and the empowerment of women have long been considered as moral and legal issues. More recently, these issues have taken on a very different connotation, mainly in terms of economic efficiency. In fact, gender imbalances affect economic efficiency with regard to the allocation of resources as well as the enhancement of productivity for sustainable development.

There is universal recognition that gender equality and women's empowerment are necessary conditions to achieve sustainable development, as supported by evidence in several studies. Cross-country analysis conducted by Klasen (1999) suggests that if countries in the Middle East, Africa,

and South Asia had closed their gender gaps in years of schooling at a rate achieved by East Asia countries between 1962-1990, the GDP in these countries could have grown by one-half percentage point per year.<sup>2</sup> Udry et al. (1995) mention that the value of household output in agricultural production in Burkina Faso would benefit from an increase of 10-20% by shifting existing resources between men's and women's plots within the same household. They also note that if the government gave the same level of agricultural inputs and education to women, the yields obtained by women could increase by more than 20%.

On the other hand, efforts made by policymakers to tackle development issues usually encompass gender equality in one way or another. Balamoune (2007) shows that higher integration in world markets and growth causes gender inequality in Sub-Saharan African countries. The findings also suggest that it is extremely important for socioeconomic policies to promote the welfare of women, in particular, by enhancing female literacy, instigating contingent trade reforms and growth-promoting policies.<sup>3</sup>

These examples show that women's empowerment is not simply a moral issue but also may present an opportunity for growth. To properly support development efforts, there is a need for the production of gender-sensitive data in support of sound policymaking, planning, program formulation, implementation and monitoring.

#### **4. THE CHALLENGE OF PRODUCING GENDER STATISTICS IN AFRICA**

A recent assessment of African NSSs in the framework of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF)<sup>4</sup> reveals that many of them are trapped in a vicious cycle, in which a shortage of funds contributes to poor performance and to low-quality statistics, which in turn creates a negative view of and hence lack of support and funding for statistical operations and development. Moreover,

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<sup>2</sup> Stephan Klasen, *Does Gender Inequality Reduce Growth and Development? Evidence from Cross-Country Regressions*, Policy Research Report on Gender and Development, Working Paper Series No. 7. The World Bank Development Research Group, November 1999.

<sup>3</sup> M. Balamoune-Lutz, "Globalisation and Gender Inequality: Is Africa Different?", *Journal of African Economies*, vol. 16, no. 2, March 2007.

<sup>4</sup> AfDB, PARIS21, UNECA, and The World Bank, *The Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa: Better Statistics for Improved Development Outcomes*, ECA Documents Publishing and Distribution Unit, Addis Ababa, October 2006.

the report revealed the fact that many national statistical plans have been designed with a special focus on the activities of the National Statistical Office (NSO); consequently, sectoral statistical production has been given less attention. As far as gender statistics are concerned, the picture is even gloomier.<sup>5</sup> In fact, African NSSs have made limited progress in designing systems and operations to generate gender-sensitive data needed to promote awareness of the social and economic implications of gender imbalances.

The challenges confronting African NSSs in terms of gender-sensitive data production and use include:

- Lack of a full understanding of gender-related concepts;
- Limited awareness about gender-related issues and concerns among data producers and users in NSSs;
- Lack of gender mainstreaming into statistical processes and programs;
- Inadequate advocacy for gender-sensitive statistics;
- Lack of commitment to gender statistics development by governments;
- Inadequate level of resources and a lack of continuity in resources for the production of gender statistics;
- Lack of coordination between statistical programs and national data priorities owing to competing demands;
- Lack of standard methodologies and tools for measuring and monitoring progress toward gender equality and empowerment of women;
- Inadequate short- and long-term planning for gender statistics development;
- Inadequate technical skills;
- Inadequate statistical infrastructure (sampling frames, classifications, documented concepts, definitions, and methods);
- Inadequate gender-sensitive data management (archiving, analysis, and dissemination); and
- Limited coordination and collaboration among data producers and experts on gender as well as research and training institutions.

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<sup>5</sup> It is worth mentioning that the lack of gender-sensitive data is not Africa specific. In this regard, the 37th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in March 2006, noted that the general lack of data to address gender issues is due largely to inadequate statistical capacity, lack of gender mainstreaming in NSSs, and inadequate concepts and methods used in collecting and to some extent analyzing gender statistics. Moreover, the Commission on the Status of Women, in its 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, acknowledged that “the activities for the advancement of women had been limited partly by the lack of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex, age and in many areas, inadequate methods for assessing progress”.

All these factors contribute to the paucity of gender-sensitive statistical information. There is therefore an urgent need to address these issues, which impact on sound decisionmaking and policy formulation.

## 5. GENDER-SENSITIVE DATA PRODUCTION AND USAGE

Given the importance of gender-sensitive, evidence-based policy decision and formulation, and the monitoring of development, a number of measures can be taken to address the challenges faced by African NSSs. These include: raising the awareness of the importance of gender in the development process; mainstreaming gender<sup>6</sup> into statistical production and processes, including household surveys and population and housing censuses; the use of vital and civil registration systems; and advocating for the undertaking of time-use surveys.

### 5.1. Advocacy

It is often assumed that producers and users of statistics are fully aware that gender-sensitive information is needed in support of their country's development efforts. However, several assessments and international fora<sup>7</sup> on gender statistics have revealed that many of the stakeholders involved in data production are not conversant with the concept of gender. Indeed, the term "gender" is often misunderstood and used indiscriminately as a synonym for "sex." As mentioned earlier, "gender" refers to socially constructed differences between sexes, while "sex" refers to relatively fixed biological differences between men and women. The development of gender-sensitive statistics has been slow due to a combination of factors, including: a lack of understanding of how gender is inextricably linked to broad development goals; a reluctance to change the traditional methods in which statistics have been compiled and presented; ignorance of how change can be effected; and indifference or lack of commitment to the concerns and issues of gender equality.

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<sup>6</sup> Gender mainstreaming was initially mentioned during the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi. The idea has since been developed and is now widely used among the UN development community. The idea was formally featured in 1995 during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

<sup>7</sup> Global Forum on Gender Statistics, Rome, Italy, December 10-12, 2007.

A better understanding of the importance of the gender concept as well as the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as necessary conditions to achieve development, is paramount for the efficient production of gender-sensitive data. To ensure this, a wide range of initiatives and activities have been taking place at national, regional, and international levels to ensure a better understanding of gender issues in statistical production.<sup>8</sup>

### **Box 1: Gender Statistics Network (GESNET)**

At the African regional level and in recognition of the importance of knowledge sharing for the development of tools aimed at addressing gender issues, UNECA has just completed the design of a Gender Statistics Network (GESNET). This is expected to provide a framework for knowledge sharing, peer learning and networking among all stakeholders dealing with gender statistics issues. Through the network, participants can advocate for sustained political commitment to integrate gender equality concerns into the policy agendas and the development of standards, frameworks and guidelines and other statistical initiatives. They can also contribute to the preparation and organization of various consultative meetings on gender measurement issues.

It is expected that the network will help to build the capacity of African countries to develop and use gender-sensitive statistics, the establishment of a permanent mechanism for promoting a dialogue among stakeholders in this area, and the improvement of gender-related analytical work in support of policymaking and program formulation, monitoring and evaluation of progress toward gender equity in poverty reduction, and other development initiatives in Africa.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Sweden, *Engendering Statistics: A Tool for Change*, 1996; FAO, *Gender Sensitive Indicators: A key tool for gender mainstreaming*, 2001.

## 5.2. Gender mainstreaming in statistical production

Mainstreaming gender into statistical production is paramount if countries are to bridge the information gap and deliver the data needed to address this critical area. This approach allows for the conduct of unbiased, evidence-based policy formulation and decisionmaking. Moreover, it helps to address issues of inequalities and women's empowerment, raises consciousness of gender issues, and persuades policymakers and other stakeholders to take into account the gender dimension in decisionmaking processes.

Tools used to collect statistical information include censuses, sample surveys (households, establishments), and administrative records, including vital and civil registrations. Whichever of the latter is considered in the production of statistics, the following steps should be considered: planning and design, methodology, data collection and processing, data analysis and dissemination. Engendering statistical production means that gender issues should be taken into account at these different stages, as elaborated below.

### *Planning and design*

The planning and design of a statistical operation are crucial to determine the different stages of the survey or census. The objective of the survey or census needs to be agreed as this will affect the remaining steps. It is also at this stage that decisions are made in terms of coverage, the target population, and the tools for the collection of the information, etc.

Engendering this stage consists in studying societal data needs. User-producers' meetings should be held to define what kind of information may be needed for a particular survey. Stakeholders should also be involved in the different steps of the survey. The various stakeholders can play an important role in advocating for data providers to respond fully to their questions; they should also be ready to articulate the benefits they expect from the survey. Women should be included at this stage, as should stakeholders who are engaged in the issue of gender equality and the empowerment of women for national development.

Samples should be drawn to represent the different constituencies of the society, including women. A labor force survey, for example, can reflect the ways in which men and women view, perform, control, and benefit from their work activities. The survey should aim to cover as many topics as possible, particularly those that are gender-sensitive. For a typical labor force survey, for example, the coverage should consider as many topics and

types of productive activities as possible, including those where women are predominantly employed. For example, work should be considered in its widest sense and coverage should include working time, job-seeking behavior, moonlighting or combined activities, casual work, subsistence activities, and informal employment etc.

### ***Methodology***

Concepts and definitions determine what is to be covered and the related details. The results of a statistical process are dependent on the definitions, concepts, and classifications used. It is therefore imperative to ensure that they reflect the actual situation of different segments of the population covered by the survey or census. For instance, they should take account of the different ways in which men and women behave, not only owing to their biological differences, but also as a result of contrasting roles, resources, power, norms and values, etc.

Furthermore, concepts and definitions should be in line with international recommendations for the topic to be covered. Employment definitions should, for example, make clear if women on extended maternity leave are to be included, as this will have an important effect on the estimates. Another example is the definition of “head of the household” which, according to some cultural norms, is invariably a man. By following international definitions and concepts, this kind of bias can be avoided.

### ***Data collection and processing***

Data collection and processing require some preliminary agreement by the survey team on the data collection instrument to be used (e.g. questionnaire), the type of questions to ask, and items to be collected. It also entails designing a set of instruments that will ensure that the questionnaire will correctly be administered, that procedures will be followed, that data will be checked for inconsistencies, etc.

The design of the questionnaire demands particular attention. The questionnaire needs to contain sufficient detail to avoid the possibility of misinterpretation by fieldworkers. The formulation of the questions can be a thorny issue, as some questions have been recognized to be biased. For example, in a labor force survey, the question should not be phrased to ask if someone is working, since work is often interpreted as “working in the formal sector”. Alternatively, if someone is asked whether he or she is involved in some informal, part-time work or in-kind activity, the response would certainly be different to that elicited by the question “Do you work?”

As mentioned earlier, statisticians and fieldworkers need to be trained in understanding gender issues. There should be also a clear decision made in terms of the use of proxies while administering the questionnaire. Beliefs, culture, and customs may influence the way a third party responds to a questionnaire on behalf of a woman. For example, in a cultural environment where women are generally and erroneously projected as “*housewives*” and men as “*breadwinners*,” asking a third party whether the woman is working may naturally lead to the answer “no.” Moreover, the presence of the husband during an interview might influence the answers to a number of questions.

The choice of the unit is also important. In fact, choosing the “household” as a unit might hide a number of realities that the different segments of the population are facing. By directing questions to individuals, one can capture the information that makes a woman different from a man.

The treatment of the collected information, including imputation, influences the results of a survey. The gender perspective must always be considered in analyzing information.

### ***Data analysis and dissemination***

Prior to collecting information on a given issue, attention should be paid to exploring existing datasets, to see whether some appropriate data analysis could highlight gender issues. For example, new results may be achieved by crossing some usual tables, such as unemployment rate by sex, with marital status, number of children, educational levels, sectors etc. This has been proved to reveal substantial differences among women themselves. For example, it is well known that unemployment rates for women are generally higher than those of men in many African countries. However, among women themselves, it is more likely that women with young children are subject to even higher unemployment rates than women without children or with older children. There is therefore a need to consider relevant disaggregation by sex (a minimum), marital status, family/personal characteristics, job characteristics, and family context, etc.

Engendering surveys can be done by some re-engineering to make sure surveys include gender issues, and by using effective tools, studying the societal needs, etc. In general, what is needed is a positive outlook in developing data tabulation policy that highlights gender issues, or by looking at gender-blind data and make their effective use through appropriate data analysis.

### **Box 2: Engendering the Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses**

Population and housing censuses (PHC) represent one of the most important statistical infrastructures for data collection on the number and characteristics of the population of a country. They are part of an integrated system that includes other censuses (such as agriculture), surveys, registers, and administrative data. They provide the benchmark for population counting at national and subnational levels and may be the only source of information for certain social, demographic, and economic characteristics in several countries. Moreover, they can be used to construct a solid framework to develop sampling frames. Building the capacity of African countries to produce gender-sensitive data is only effective if gender aspects are mainstreamed into PHC.

To mainstream gender into PHC, the various considerations discussed for surveys also apply. At the regional level, the UNECA is undertaking a project aimed at engendering the Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses (P&R). The expected output is the production of a Gender African Supplement to the P&R. The project consists in reviewing from a gender perspective, the statistical frameworks for the preparation of the 2010 Round of PHC and providing recommendations on how to integrate gender perspectives in census undertaking.

### **5.3. Time-Use Surveys (TUSs)**

Economic activities can be subdivided into productive and non-productive ones. Productive activities are those associated with work, while non-productive activities mainly comprise personal activities. The general production boundary is that of activities, the performance of which can be delegated to a third person and yield the same output. According to the System of National Accounts (SNA), productive activities comprise the following:

- Activities that involve goods and services supplied or intended to be supplied to units other than their producers;

- Own-account production of goods retained by their producers (including all production and processing of primary products, whether for the market, for barter, or for own consumption);
- Own-account production of housing services by owner-occupiers; and
- Domestic and personal services produced in a household by paid domestic staff.

SNA production excludes all household activities that produce domestic or personal services for own final consumption within the same household (except for paid domestic staff). These exclusions include cleaning, servicing and repairs, preparation and servicing of meals, as well as unpaid volunteer services to other households, community, and other associations.

The concept of work is associated with the SNA activities. Only people who are engaged in SNA work are considered to be economically active, while non-SNA activities are considered as non-economic activities. According to national accounts and labor force estimations, non-SNA activities are unvalued or invisible. It is well known that, on the whole, it is women who are involved in these unvalued and invisible activities. From this evidence, it is clear that the contribution to the economy of an important portion of the population dealing with the latter kind of activities is not captured in the framework of the standard SNA.

Fortunately, statisticians have made provision for satellite accounts that help capture issues outside the SNA framework. In order to integrate unpaid work and household production in African NA, it is essential to construct national satellite accounts on household production. The first step in this process is to carry out Time-Use Surveys (TUSs). TUSs quantify how women and men, girls and boys spend their time between paid and unpaid work and leisure. They analyze activities and the time spent on each of them. As they deal with all kinds of activities that people are involved in during a given period of time, they constitute a critical instrument to evaluate the burden of unpaid work and household production, so as to inform policymaking and budgetary allocation. Once TUSs are conducted, the output is used to construct national satellite accounts to extend the SNA by integrating unpaid work and household production. This allows the capture and evaluation of the entire economy, including market and non-market components.

UNECA serves as the regional arm of the United Nations in Africa, with a mandate to support economic and social development, to foster regional integration, and promote international cooperation. Through its African

Center for Gender and Social Development (ACGS), UNECA has developed a gender-aware macroeconomic model based on the principle of General Computable Equilibrium Models. This provides detailed information at micro and macro levels using a Social Accounting Matrix emanating from the TUS and the satellite accounts on household production. In this model, gender is considered as a category of analysis in macroeconomics, so as to integrate the gender dimension into macroeconomic variables, instruments, and policies such as labor, employment, fiscal, and trade policies etc.

Despite a general consensus on the importance of TUSs, only a few African countries have undertaken one so far, namely Benin, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa. The UNECA is currently supporting the undertaking of TUSs in other African countries, including Djibouti and Ghana.

#### **5.4. Administrative data**

Administrative data are sourced from administrative records, which are compiled in the course of routine operations of government ministries and institutions. These data are usually compiled for internal (own) administrative use rather than for statistical purposes and they constitute an important source of official statistics in all countries. In many cases, these are the only sources of data. This is the case of school net enrollment data used for the monitoring of the MDGs. All African countries use administrative data from ministries in charge of education and this is the information used by the UNESCO to feed the UNSD database.

Civil and vital registration systems are an important source of administrative data, as they record the occurrence and characteristics of vital events – birth, death and causes of death, marriage, divorce, and adoption, etc. according to the laws, regulations, and legal requirements of a country. This information generally constitutes an important source of data disaggregated by sex. Combined with other sources, they can also provide gender-sensitive information. In fact, they provide vital rates such as infant mortality rate, child mortality rate, and maternal mortality rate. However, the completeness of coverage and the accuracy are prerequisites for the vital and civil registration systems information to be relevant and reliable. Unfortunately, many African countries do not have civil and vital registration systems that meet the reliability and completeness criteria; this means that information that is crucial for addressing development issues is not available.

The main issues affecting the establishment of reliable civil and vital registration systems in Africa include infrastructure, organization, and management of the registration process, capacity constraints, and lack of suitable legislative frameworks. There is therefore a need to set up reliable civil and vital registration systems in support of the production of official statistics and gender-sensitive information.

## 6. THE AFRICAN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT INDEX

To address the issue of gender inequalities and the empowerment of women (as requested in many conventions and charters signed by African countries), the UNECA has developed an effective monitoring mechanism, namely the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI).<sup>9</sup> This index is expected to support policymakers in the assessment of their own performance and in the implementation of gender-balanced policies and programs.

The AGDI is a composite index that combines the Gender Status Index (GSI), which measures relative gender inequalities based on readily available quantitative indicators, and the African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS), a set of qualitative measures of progress in women's empowerment and advancement. It incorporates major international and African charters, conventions, and documents dealing with gender issues (see Annex 2).

The GSI is made up of three blocks, namely social power, economic power, and political power. Each block consists of various components, subcomponents, and indicators/variables, as depicted in Annex 1 at the end of this paper. Equal weight is given to components, subcomponents, and indicators. Each indicator is calculated as the proportion of female achievement to male achievement for the given variable.

The AWPS captures qualitative issues in relation to the performance of gender policies of African governments and by taking into account all major international and African conventions and charters that address women's concerns. It measures progress made by African countries in ratifying relevant conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the African

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<sup>9</sup> Details on the AGDI can be found in *The African Gender Development Index*, UNECA Document Reproduction and Distribution Unit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2004.

Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), and in implementing policies, in line with international documents, on such issues as violence against women, maternal mortality, contraception, HIV/AIDS, women's land rights, women's right to equal wages and access to new technologies and agricultural extension services.

The AWPS uses a simple three-point scoring system from 0 – 1 – 2. The AWPS also uses the same weights for all variables. It is measured in percentages set to a possible maximum score, in which each row is seen to have a possible maximum score of 100%. The total score of the AWPS is similarly computed from the total of all 13 rows, which again is set at 100%. The scoring is done on a three-point scale with 0 indicating a zero performance on the measures on the horizontal axis, 1 a poor to fair performance, and 2 a good to excellent performance (see Annex 2).

The AGDI has a number of strengths and weaknesses. The *strengths* include the following:

- It comprises a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures;
- It allows measurement of issues that so far are not taken into account in internationally comparative indices, such as time use and ownership of rural/urban plots/houses or land;
- It is based on nationally available data, unlike other indices that rely on internationally maintained databases;
- It measures issues of particular relevance to the African context;
- It uses African policy documents such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS;
- It is very easy to generate and use.

On the other hand, the AGDI also has some *weaknesses*, including:

- The limitation to measuring the gender gap, irrespective of the general socioeconomic performance of a country;
- The inability to capture issues such as identity and personal choice;
- The focus on gender equality and the status of women without any reference to other intersecting factors such as race, ethnicity, the rural/urban gap and age.

Twelve African countries have completed the AGDI process so far, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda. It is

expected that the tool will be implemented in additional countries, namely Botswana, Cape Verde, Gambia, Namibia, and Senegal.

## 7. PARTNERSHIPS

In line with the actions recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action, the international community has set up a series of fora on gender statistics. These are expected to enhance countries' capacity to collect, use, and disseminate indicators assessing the status of women in society. Furthermore they will provide a platform for international dialogue on how to improve indicators, and support more effective policies on gender.

The Global Forum, as well as the Inter Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on Gender Statistics, were established in December 2006 to meet a growing demand for quality gender statistics and to create synergies among existing initiatives around the world. The Global Forum on Gender Statistics took place in Rome, Italy on December 10-12, 2007, followed by the establishment of the IAEG on Gender Statistics. The Rome Forum focused on the exchange of best practices on data collection through different sources such as censuses, household surveys, and administrative records. It also witnessed the launch of GenderInfo, the most comprehensive database on gender available to the public. Moreover, it dealt with issues related to violence against women, since this has proven to be a difficult endeavor, although high emphasis has been given to this topic by many countries around the globe.

The IAEG on Gender Statistics has been established to serve as a permanent space to disseminate best practices on data collection and on how to translate this information into sound policymaking. It is also intended to align partners working on gender statistics, review the latest technical and methodological developments on the subject, and serve as a platform to maintain GenderInfo. As such, it will also serve as a permanent mechanism to improve global coherence on gender statistics; promote methodological developments; build technical capacity; and improve access to data and other materials related to this subject. The IAEG will focus on those research areas related to violence against women, informal work, time-use, and poverty. This group will also contribute to the production of teaching materials to conduct training workshops at regional and country levels.

At the African regional level, stakeholders have set up a Working Group within the framework of the Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM-

Africa) during the first meeting of this apex body. The Working Group is expected to develop a regional program on gender statistics that will serve as the framework for intervention in African countries. In addition, during the high-level dialogue on gender statistics held in Kampala, Uganda from June 9-10, 2008, participants adopted the formation of the Kampala City Group on Gender Statistics.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

It is now globally acknowledged that gender is not only a moral issue but also, and more importantly, a development issue. Despite this recognition, little progress has been made in addressing gender issues. One of the principal reasons for this is the lack of information on gender issues, not only sex-disaggregated data but also gender statistics as defined previously. This information is badly needed in support of sound policymaking and program formulation, monitoring, and evaluation.

As a way forward and in order to reinforce ongoing efforts, a number of guiding principles should be adopted. Data producers should strive to collect, collate, and present statistics on individuals disaggregated by sex. This is a minimum that is required to undertake gender-sensitive decision-making and policy formulation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of development objectives. African countries should mainstream gender into NSSs, to ensure that gender issues are better understood and taken into account at every step of the statistical process. Moreover, there is need for enhanced coordination at the national level as well as with development partners, to ensure that surveys and censuses are engendered. As populations and housing censuses are one of the most important statistical activities undertaken by countries, there is a pressing need to building the capacity of African countries to produce gender-sensitive data and to mainstream these into the PHC.

There is also a need for increased networking and regular information sharing between stakeholders dealing with gender measurement issues. In this regard, GESNET is a commendable initiative which should be promoted. Countries should also review available data and information to identify where the gender data gaps are. In doing so, particular attention should be devoted to using the available data to generate and improve gender statistics production before exploring the possibility of collecting additional information on gender statistics.

NSOs need to consider where they are now, in relation to engendering statistics; also where they want to be, how to get there, what it will take, and what they need to prioritize. They should consider the staff levels to dedicate to gender statistics, coordination mechanisms with users and other producers of statistics, and encourage gender budgeting in all sectors. Sectors will have to be technically supported to engender their statistics. It is also critical that advocacy for engendering statistics is carried out both in NSOs and in the entire NSSs. Prototype modules for capacity building have been developed by several organizations, including the UNSD and the World Bank. The material can be accessed through their respective websites.

Finally, the setting up of the Global Forum, the IAEG, the STATCOM-Africa Working Group on Gender Statistics, and the Kampala City Group on Gender Statistics will certainly help to move the agenda forward. They provide fora where partners and countries can exchange their respective experiences on data collection and on how to best translate this information into sound policymaking and program formulation. African countries and organizations should participate fully and effectively in these fora to ensure the sustainability of ongoing efforts.

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**ANNEX 1: THE AGDI – THE GENDER STATUS INDEX**

Block	Component	Subcomponent	Indicator
<b>Social power “capabilities”</b>	Education	Enrollment rate	Primary enrollment rate
			Secondary enrollment rate
			Tertiary enrollment rate
		Dropout	Primary dropout ratio
			Secondary dropout ratio
		Literacy	Ability to read and write
	Primary school completed		
	Health	Child health	Stunting under 3
			Underweight under 3
			Mortality under 5
		Life expectancy at birth	
New HIV infection			
Time spent out of work			
<b>Economic power “opportunities”</b>	Income	Wages	Wages in agriculture
			Wages in civil service
			Wages in formal sector (public and private)
			Wages in informal sector
	Income	Income	Income from informal enterprise
			Income from small agricultural household enterprise
			Income from remittances and inter-household transfers
	Time use or employment	Time use	Time spent in market economic activities (paid employee, own-account or employer)
			Time spent in non-market economic activities or as unpaid family worker in market economic activities
			Time spent in domestic care and volunteer activities
Employment		Share of paid employees, own-account workers and employers in total employment	

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## ANNEX 1: THE GENDER STATUS INDEX (cont.)

Block	Component	Subcomponent	Indicator
<b>Economic power “opportunities”</b>	Access to resources	Means of production	Ownership of rural/urban plots/houses or land
			Access to credit
			Freedom to dispose of own income
		Management	Employers
			High civil servant (class A)
			Members of professional syndicates
			Administrative, scientific, and technical
<b>Political power “agency”</b>	Public sector	Members of parliament	
		Cabinet ministers	
		Higher court judges	
		Members of local councils	
		Higher positions in civil service	
	Civil society	Senior positions in	Political parties
			Trade unions
			Employers’ associations
			Professional syndicates
		Heads or managers of NGOs	
		Heads of community-based associations or unions	

## ANNEX 2: THE AGDI – THE AFRICAN WOMEN’S PROGRESS SCOREBOARD (AWPS)

			Ratification	Reporting	Law	Policy commitment	Development of a plan	Targets	Institutional mechanism	Budget	Human resources	Research	Involvement of civil society	Information and dissemination	Monitoring and evaluation	Total	%		
WOMEN'S RIGHTS	CEDAW	Ratification without reservation																	
		Optional protocol																	
		Art 2																	
		Art 16																	
		African Charter of Human and People's Rights-Women's Rights Protocol- Harmful Practices																	
SOCIAL		Beijing Platform for Action																	
	Violence against women	Domestic violence																	
		Rape																	
		Sexual harassment																	
		Traffic in women																	
			African Charter on the rights of the Child art XXVII																
	Health	STI's																	
		HIV/AIDS																	
	ICPD	Maternal mortality																	
		Contraception																	
			2001 Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS and women																
Education	Policy on girl school dropout																		
	Education on human/women's rights																		

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## ANNEX 2: THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S PROGRESS SCOREBOARD (cont.)

			Ratification	Reporting	Law	Policy commitment	Development of a plan	Targets	Institutional mechanism	Budget	Human resources	Research	Involvement of civil society	Information and dissemination	Monitoring and evaluation	Total	%				
ECONOMIC	ILO	Convention 100																			
		Convention 111																			
		Convention 183																			
		Policy on HIV/AIDS																			
			Engendering NPRS																		
			Access to agricultural extension services																		
			Access to technology																		
		Equal access to land																			
POLITICAL		UN 1325 conflict resolution																			
		Beijing PFA effective and accessible national machinery																			
	Policies	Support to women's quota and affirmative action																			
		Decisionmaking positions within parliaments/ministries																			
		Gender mainstreaming in all depts																			