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Sustainable Development Goal 5

Gender equality indicators: data availability in Arab countries

Summary

The present document provides an analytical assessment of data availability for gender-related indicators in the Arab region for monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG5 on gender equality, in line with the Global Indicators Database. It also reviews the tier classification of indicators developed by the United Nations Statistical Division.

The document also highlights the main challenges encountered by Arab countries in collecting gender-related data, and highlights the recommendations under SDG5 on gender equality that countries should implement by 2030. The Committee on Women is invited to take note of the regional assessment and recommendations.



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Introduction

1. The present document offers a brief introduction on gender statistics, and the Gender Statistics Programme of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). It also provides an overview of the gender-related indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG5 on gender equality, in the global indicator framework, and a description of the tier classification of indicators developed by the United Nations Statistical Division. It also presents the results of the regional assessment of data availability in Arab countries, highlighting the challenges encountered, and sets out recommendations for countries to implement by 2030 under SDG5.

I. GENDER STATISTICS

2. Gender statistics inform policy and programme decisions, and are critical to effective monitoring and analyses of gender gains and gaps. The need and demand for gender statistics in many areas at the national, regional and global levels for systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective within statistical systems remain unmet.

3. Gender statistics can be generated by government agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and regional and international organizations. It is important to champion the efforts of all actors in all sectors to advance the gender data agenda.

4. Data types differ according to data needs and data sources vary (population censuses, civil registration, vital statistics, household surveys, administrative records, agriculture surveys, environmental monitoring, economic statistics, labour force surveys and establishments surveys).

5. The aim of collecting gender data should not be only to present numerical information, but also to help people transform data into information, information into knowledge, and knowledge into action.

II. ESCWA GENDER STATISTICS PROGRAMME

6. Since 1997, ESCWA, in coordination with many United Nations agencies and regional institutions, has been implementing the Gender Statistics Programme aimed at enhancing national capabilities in the production, use and dissemination of gender statistics for more effective developmental policies promoting change for the benefit of women and the advancement of society as a whole. To meet the growing demand for comparable gender statistics, the Programme implements activities, including statistical publications, technical materials, advisory services, field projects and capacity-building activities.

7. The ESCWA Statistics Division publishes gender statistics bulletins, gender statistics country profiles, and gender-related technical documents such as the Arab Gender Statistics Framework, the Arab Gender Issues and Indicators Metadata Handbook, and a glossary of gender-related terms in English and Arabic. It also developed a dashboard outlining country profiles for 22 Arab countries in terms of progress in key development indicators on gender and young people. Furthermore, it produces regularly the Arab E-Catalogue, a compendium for national publications and activities; and a newsletter entitled “*Ensaf*” on the latest gender statistical activities and products.

8. The Statistics Division also provides technical advisory services to member States upon request. This includes: training of focal points in national statistical offices and line ministries on gender concepts and statistics; technical advice on the development of the national gender statistics frameworks and databases; and training on specialized surveys such as violence against women, time use statistics, and disability statistics.

9. In response to repeated requests for more and better statistics on women and men and for gender-based indicators, the Statistics Division developed a gender statistics e-learning curriculum (in Arabic) to build the capacity of national institutions in data collection and the dissemination of sex-disaggregated and gender-

sensitive indicators, and to monitor, measure and analyse progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

III. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

10. On 1 January 2016, the world officially began implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to address urgent global challenges and ensure sustainable social and economic progress through its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development -economic, social and environmental - in a comprehensive global vision.

11. The new global indicator framework, comprising 232 indicators to monitor the achievement of the 17 SDGs and their 169 associated targets, was developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), and endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-seventh session of in March 2017.

12. Given that effective follow-up and review is critical to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Member States of the United Nations have agreed that the SDG follow-up and review process should be informed by an annual progress report prepared by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the United Nations system, based on the global indicator framework and data produced by national statistical systems and information collected at the regional level. The resulting data would be stored in the Global Indicators Database, maintained by the United Nations Statistical Divisions, and available from <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>.

13. The SDGs include a stand-alone gender-related goal (SDG5) on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, thus reaffirming that gender equality and women's empowerment is at the forefront of global policy concerns. They were adopted unanimously by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

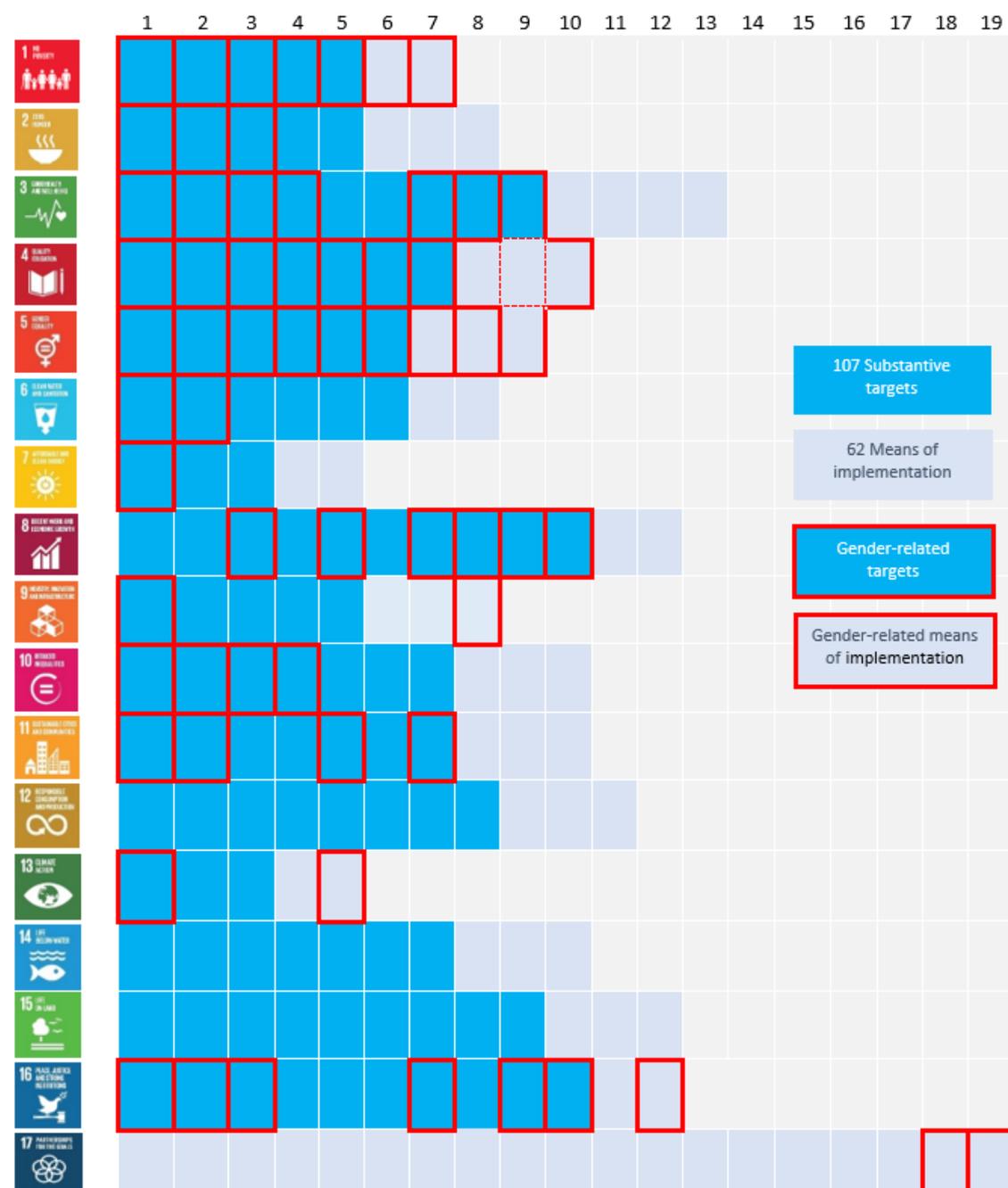
14. Gender equality is covered in almost all of the 17 SDGs, which have more targets and indicators than the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For example, MDG3 on gender equality and women's empowerment had 1 target and 4 indicators, while SDG5 has 9 targets and 14 indicators. In addition, the SDGs were developed by member States, while the MDGs were adopted by international organizations.

15. The focus on gender equality and women's empowerment is explicit in the SDGs, not only through a stand-alone goal on gender equality (SDG5), but also as a cross-cutting theme with 65 related targets, 88 gender-related indicators, and gender-related means of implementation (figure 1).

IV. SDG5 AND TIER CLASSIFICATION

16. To facilitate monitoring and reporting on available data series, capacity-building and research, all SDG indicators are classified by the United Nations Statistical Division into the following three tiers, based on their level of methodological development and availability of data at the global level:

- Tier I: A standardized methodology already exists, and data are already widely available;
- Tier II: A standardized methodology already exists, but data are not easily available;
- Tier III: Standardized methodologies are not available, and a new collection of tools and methodologies need to be developed .

Figure 1. Gender in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Source: ESCWA Statistics Division.

17. Table 1 sets out the 14 SDG5 indicators: 4 qualitative and 10 quantitative. There are 24 sub-indicators, classified by tier. All the qualitative indicators are unavailable, and are therefore all classified in tier III. Four quantitative sub-indicators are classified in tier I, 12 in tier II, and the rest in tier III.

18. Lead agencies are working on developing methodologies for collecting and presenting tier III indicators. For instance, sub-indicator 5.5.1b on “Women in local governments” is being developed by UN Women in collaboration with the regional commissions’ statistical divisions.

Table 1. Indicators under SDG5

Type	Indicator	Sub-Indicators	Tier
Qualitative	5.1.1 Legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor	2	III
Quantitative	5.2.1 Physical, sexual or psychological violence (partner)	3	II
Quantitative	5.2.2 Sexual violence (other than partner)	1	II
Quantitative	5.3.1 Early marriage	1	II
Quantitative	5.3.2 Female genital mutilation (by age)	1	II
Quantitative	5.4.1 Unpaid domestic and care work	1	II
Quantitative	5.5.1 Women in national parliaments and local governments	2	I
Quantitative	5.5.2 Proportion of women in senior and middle managerial positions	2	I
Qualitative	5.6.1 Decisions on sexual relations, contraceptives, reproductive health care	3	III
Quantitative	5.6.2 Access to sexual and reproductive health care	3	III
Quantitative	5.a.1 Ownership rights over agricultural land	2	II
Qualitative	5.a.2 Percentage of countries where the legal framework guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control	1	III
Quantitative	5.b.1 Owning a mobile telephone	1	I
Qualitative	5.c.1 Tracking public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	1	III
14 indicators		24	
Sub-indicator x tier		4xI	12xII 8xIII

Source: ESCWA Statistics Division.

V. SDG5 INDICATORS IN ARAB COUNTRIES

19. SDG5 assessment of country data availability in tiers I and II show that only four SDG5 sub-indicators are being reported by Arab countries: proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, proportion of women in managerial positions, proportion of women in senior and middle management positions, and proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone. The results of the assessment reveal a lack of data in most of SDG5 indicators, and a lack of coverage by all Arab countries in those four indicators (table 2).

Table 2. Data availability for SDG5 indicators in Arab countries

SDG5 sub-indicators in tiers I and II	Countries
5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments	Algeria – Bahrain – Comoros – Djibouti – Egypt – Iraq – Jordan – Kuwait – Lebanon – Libya – Mauritania – Morocco – Oman – Qatar – Saudi Arabia – Somalia – Sudan – Syrian Arab Republic – Tunisia – United Arab Emirates – Yemen
	Algeria – Bahrain – Egypt – Jordan – Kuwait – Lebanon – Morocco – Oman – Palestine – Qatar – Saudi Arabia – Syrian Arab republic – Tunisia – United Arab Emirates – Yemen
5.5.2 Proportion of women in senior and middle management positions	Palestine
	Bahrain – Egypt – Morocco – Oman – Palestine

Source: ESCWA Statistics Division.

VI. REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF SDG GENDER INDICATORS

20. Data are compiled by national and international sources. However, not all national data are presented in international databases. Specialized agencies fill in data gaps by making estimations or adjustments to generate comparable international standardized data. International agencies might also apply modelling methods when data are available from different sources in a time series. Therefore, the Global SDG Indicator Database includes either estimated, modelled, country or country adjusted data, in addition to global indicators collected and computed at the global level. For the purpose of this assessment, global indicators will not be included.

21. In the present report, assessment of data availability is made using the Global SDG Indicator Database, as the only consolidated and comprehensive global database available. The regional assessment includes 36 sub-indicators (see box below) of 29 gender-related indicators in tier I, as per availability in the SDG Database. Tier II and III indicators were not included in the assessment, owing to scarcity of data for tier II and no standardized methodology for tier III.

22. The criteria for the regional assessment is based on availability of two or more data in a time series, or if data are not available for more than 50 per cent of countries, as per the SDG Database. A total of 36 gender sub-indicators in the tier I assessment of all data types (estimated, modelled, country and country-adjusted) show that over half of the countries have 67 per cent available indicators.

23. To assess country capacity, it is essential that the assessment is based on national data, which is represented by country and country-adjusted data in the SDG Database. The results of country data assessment in tier I show a decrease in data availability from 67 per cent to 42 per cent of available national data in the SDG Database. Specifically, of the 36 sub-indicators, 21 are not available in the SDG Database. Those indicators were in areas such as poverty, hunger, child/infant mortality, family planning, empowerment, water and sanitation, clean fuels, child labour, social protection, information technology, and slums.

24. Country data may not be available in the SDG Database either because data are not available/collected at the country level, are collected but do not follow international standards, are not officially disseminated, or are not applicable at the country level. Data sources for those unavailable indicators include: civil registration, household surveys, labour force surveys, vital registration systems, administrative records, economic statistics, or responses to lead agency or global institutions' questionnaires.

Gender sub-indicators under tier I

GOAL1: POVERTY

- 1.1.1 Proportion of employed population below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day (the working poor)
- 1.2.1 Proportion of population below national poverty line

GOAL 2: HUNGER

- 2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment
- 2.2.1 Proportion of stunted children (height for age below minus two standard deviations from the median) under the age of 5 years
- 2.2.2 Proportion of wasted children (weight for height below minus two standard deviations from the median) under the age of 5 years
- 2.2.2 Proportion of overweight children (weight for height above plus two standard deviations from the median) under the age of 5 years

GOAL 3: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- 3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
- 3.2.1 Infant mortality rate
- 3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate

BOX (*continued*)

- 3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate
- 3.7.1 Proportion of women married or in a union of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods

GOAL 4: EDUCATION

- 4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age)
- 4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in lower secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country
- 4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in pre-primary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country
- 4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in primary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country
- 4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country

GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY

- 5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments
- 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions
- 5.5.2 Proportion of women in senior and middle management positions
- 5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone

GOAL 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- 6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
- 6.2.1 Proportion of population practicing open defecation
- 6.2.1 Proportion of population with basic handwashing facilities on premises
- 6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services

GOAL 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- 7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology

GOAL 8: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT

- 8.5.2 Unemployment rate
- 8.7.1 Proportion of children aged 5 - 17 years engaged in labour
- 8.8.1 Frequency rates of non-fatal occupational injuries among employees
- 8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

GOAL 9: INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION

- 9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by at least a 2G mobile network
- 9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by at least a 3G mobile network
- 9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by at least a 4G mobile network

GOAL 10: INEQUALITY

- 10.4.1 Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers
- 11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums

GOAL 16: JUSTICE

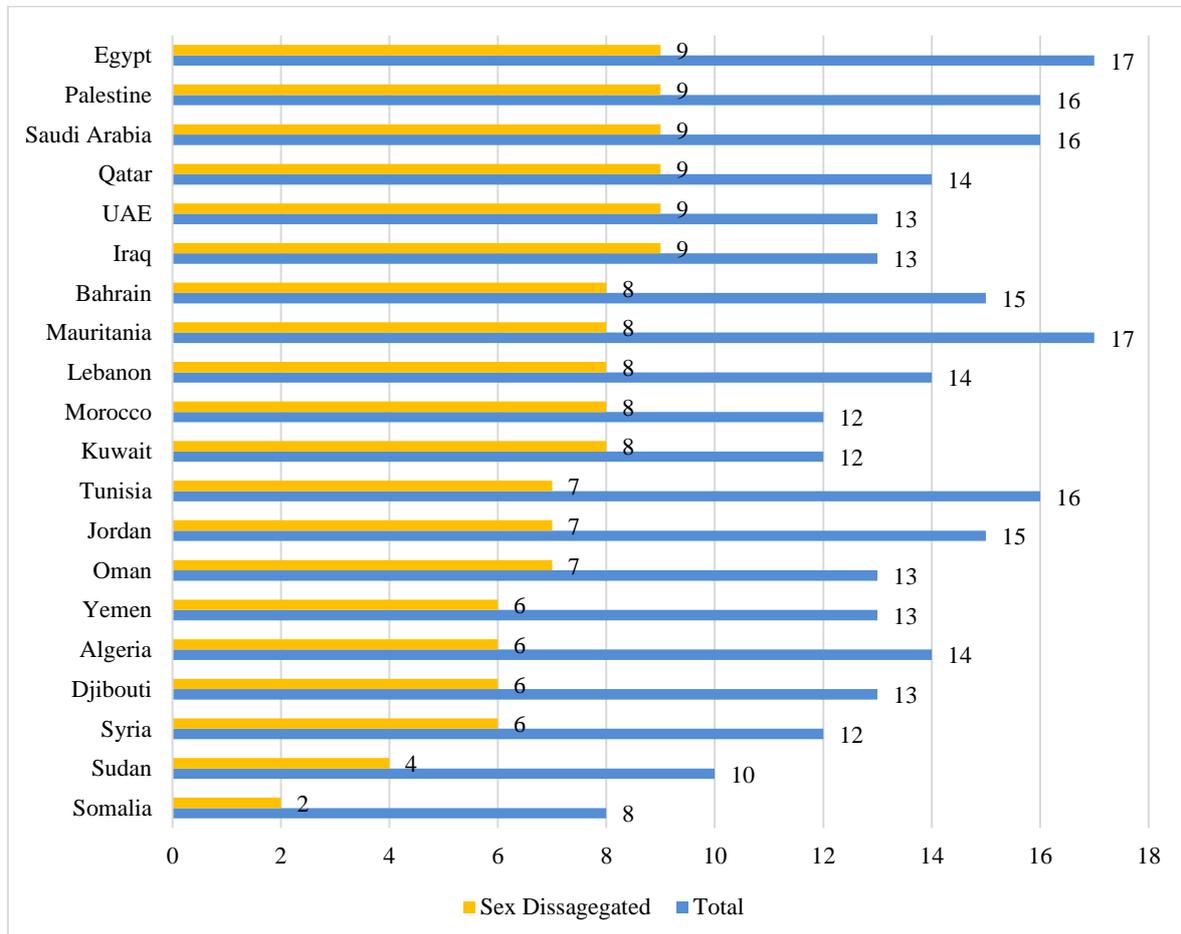
- 16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide
- 16.9.1 Proportion of births registered with a civil authority

Source: ESCWA Statistics Division..

VII. SEX-DISAGGREGATED INDICATORS AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

25. Most countries compile and disseminate some gender-related indicators in totals, but they do not compile and/or disseminate data by sex. Figure 2 illustrates the availability of gender indicators in totals and in sex-disaggregated data as reported by Arab countries in the SDG Database.

Figure 2. Availability of gender indicators in totals and in sex-disaggregated data



Source: ESCWA Statistics Division.

26. The assessment shows that Arab countries collect less than a fifth of gender-related indicators in totals, and less than 10 per cent provide data disaggregated by sex. For example, Egypt, and Mauritania collect the highest number of gender-related indicators in totals (17 per cent), but they only disaggregate half by sex.

27. Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have the highest available sex-disaggregated data (9 per cent), while Somalia and the Comoros are at the lowest scale among the 22 Arab countries that produce sex-disaggregated data, with 2 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively.

VIII. CHALLENGES

28. Huge data gaps exist, which hinder measuring gender equality. Countries face four main challenges in collecting and compiling data on gender: coverage, comparability, complexity and granularity.

29. Lack of coverage across countries and/or of regular country production: The majority of countries do not collect and/or disseminate SDG gender-related indicators, and only a handful produce them at regular intervals.

30. Lack of international standards in all indicators for comparability: Statistical methods and gender statistics are still lagging in many areas, including decision-making positions in local government and private sector (SDG 5.5); poverty based on individual-level data (SDG 1); quality of education and lifelong learning (SDG 4); social protection measures (SDGs 1.3, 8.b, 10.4); access to land, natural resources and land tenure (SDGs 1.4.1, 5.a.1, 2, 6, 7, 14 and 15); universal health coverage (SDG 3.8); and climate change and natural disasters (SDGs 1.5.1 and 13).

31. Lack of complex information across domains: Gender equality, recognized as a crosscutting issue, is covered under all the SDGs, not only SDG5. However, many countries do not cross-tabulate their data in various socioeconomic domains to produce a more detailed analysis to better inform policymakers, including at the individual level, by sex, wealth quintile, education, employment, geographical location, type of household, family size, disability status, and receipt of benefits.

32. Lack of granularity in detailed datasets allowing for further disaggregation by sex, age and geographical area: To achieve gender equality, it is important to improve availability of and access to data and statistics disaggregated by sex. Many countries compile gender-related indicators in totals, but do not disaggregate them by sex, as shown in figure 2.

IX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

33. Despite progress in compiling gender statistics in the Arab countries, there is an urgent need for stronger political will to step up the collection and dissemination of gender indicators in data collection and production process in all national statistical systems; and to institute legal frameworks and mechanisms for monitoring and implementing laws, policies and gender budgeting towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Women's machineries/gender ministries must work on such instituting legal frameworks, if not available. SDG5 outlines a number of legal frameworks and systems that countries need to implement by 2030, as follows:

(a) Develop national laws to promote gender equality and non-discrimination against women and girls, and mechanisms to enforce and monitor the implementation of legal frameworks for each area of law such as discrimination against women, equal pay for work of equal value, work prohibitions, family leave, inheritance/property, nationality, marriage and divorce, violence against women, quotas, pensions and legal capacity;

(b) Establish legal/regulatory frameworks that explicitly guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health services without third party authorization (from the spouse, guardian, parents or others); and access to sexual and reproductive health services without restrictions in terms of age and marital status;

(c) Establish legal frameworks (including customary law) that guarantee women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control. 'Land ownership' is defined as a legally recognized right to acquire, use and transfer landed property. "Control over land" is defined as the ability to make decisions over landed property;

(d) Develop systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. Public finance management systems must incorporate gender equality. Allocations and expenditures for gender equality are considered public if they are available in a timely and accessible manner through official government channels, including ministry websites, official bulletins and public notices.
