Report

Fourth inter-agency and expert group meeting on gender statistics in the Arab region
Dead Sea, Jordan, 9-10 may 2016

Summary

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) convened the fourth Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting (IAEGM) on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region in the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 9 and 10 May 2016.

The meeting discussed gender-related issues in the Arab region and reviewed the state of development of gender statistics for evidence-based policymaking, particularly focusing on the following topics: (a) strengthened coordination and cooperation to produce gender statistics for policymaking; (b) new gender statistics collection tools to produce relevant information for monitoring and reporting; (c) improved measurement methods to analyse gender statistics for effective programme and policymaking; and (d) good practice in capacity-building activities and dissemination methods.

This report sets out the recommendations issued during the Inter-Agency and Expert Group Meeting on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region at its fourth session.
I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Statistics Division at the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) convened the fourth Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on Gender Statistics (IAEGM-GS) in the Arab Region in the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 9 and 10 May 2016.

2. The IAEG-GS meeting brought together 25 participants, including representatives from the regional offices of the following six agencies: the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); the World Health Organization (WHO); the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC). The meeting was also attended by representatives from national statistical offices of 13 Arab countries, national women’s and gender equality ministries and civil society.

II. OBJECTIVES

3. The objectives of the meeting were the following:

   (a) Strengthening coordination and cooperation to produce relevant gender statistics for policymaking;

   (b) Sharing experiences on new collection tools to produce relevant information for monitoring and reporting on gender issues;

   (c) Improving measurement methods to analyse gender statistics for effective programme and policymaking;

   (d) Discussing good practice in capacity-building activities and dissemination methods.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

4. Participants reaffirmed the importance of gender statistics frameworks at the national and regional levels in monitoring and reporting on gender equality and women’s empowerment. They underlined the need to integrate those frameworks in monitoring the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on Gender Equality, and assess data availability and quality to produce harmonized and comparable data:

   (a) The ESCWA secretariat was requested to send a questionnaire to member States on SDG 5 indicators, mapping it to the Arab Regional Framework on Gender Statistics, and make the questionnaire responses available;

   (b) Member States were invited to complete the questionnaire within the set deadline and provide the required data;

   (c) Member States were also invited to integrate SDG 5 in their national frameworks, and produce gender statistics and other publications based on their national gender statistics frameworks.

5. Participants called for strengthened coordination with policymakers and other stakeholders to integrate a gender perspective in national policies and strategies, and to monitor and evaluate their impact on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women:

   (a) National statistics offices were invited to work closely with civil society, women’s and gender equality ministries and policymakers to monitor and evaluate the impact of selected gender policies, through reporting on baseline indicators and tracking changes in the issues of concern over time;
(b) The ESCWA secretariat was to request information from member States to make a record of these practices and share them during the following IAEG-GS meeting.

6. Participants proposed that dialogue with users of gender statistics be enhanced, in order to improve the quality, dissemination and use of data:

   (a) Member States were invited to create a list of active gender statistics users, and join forces to use statistics effectively in their policies and programmes;

   (b) The ESCWA secretariat was requested to identify good practice by some of those active users and invite them to present their experiences at the following IAEG-GS meeting.

B. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

7. Participants stressed the importance of mainstreaming gender in all statistical processes:

   (a) The ESCWA secretariat was requested to compile good practice in member States, document the examples and share them;

   (b) Member States were invited to contribute to the knowledge sharing exercise by providing good examples of mainstreaming gender in data production processes.

8. Participants commended the conceptual framework for developing national gender statistics programmes developed by ESCWA, and invited member States to use it as a tool to improve the quality of their statistical activities:

   (a) The ESCWA secretariat was invited to publish a paper on the framework and disseminate it to all data producers;

   (b) Member States were invited to adopt the conceptual framework and report on changes made to their national programmes on gender statistics in the following IAEG-GS meeting.

C. MEASUREMENT METHODS

9. Participants reaffirmed the importance of conducting in-depth analyses of gender issues, using a higher level of data disaggregation and more detailed classifications of variables, in particular to assess the impact of implemented policies:

   (a) The ESCWA secretariat was requested to develop in-depth analysis methods, to be shared with member States representatives and practiced by them in a workshop;

   (b) Member States were invited to step up the finalization of their national frameworks and databases in order to participate in the workshop, and present results and good practice during the following IAEGS-GS meeting.

10. Participants highlighted the need to use the United Nations technical resources and guidelines in order to produce harmonized data that better reflect gender issues and gaps:

   (a) The ESCWA secretariat was requested to include all United Nations gender-related resources and publications in the Arab Catalogue of Gender Statistics, and to publish it on the ESCWA website;

   (b) Member States were encouraged to make use of the United Nations standardized resources in the production of their gender-related data and publications;
(c) Member States were also invited to complete their inputs to the Arab Catalogue of Gender Statistics and disseminate it through their official websites.

D. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND DISSEMINATION

11. Participants commended the Arabic language e-learning software on gender statistics developed by ESCWA:

   (a) The ESCWA secretariat was invited to finalize and widely disseminate the e-learning tool during the second half of 2016;

   (b) Member States were encouraged to promote the use of the e-learning software by data producers and users, and to establish a training plan and organize national workshops on the tool.

12. Participants underlined the importance of adopting the International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics (ICATUS) to produce comparable and harmonized time use data:

   (a) The ESCWA secretariat was requested to organize a workshop on ICATUS, jointly with the United Nations Statistics Division, once the Classification is finalized;

   (b) Member States were encouraged to implement ICATUS in new surveys on time use statistics.

13. Participants recognized the importance of using unified terms in gender statistics to avoid errors and misconceptions:

   (a) The ESCWA secretariat was invited to continue updating the Glossary of Gender Statistics Terms on its website;

   (b) National gender focal points or statistical units were requested to ensure correct use of terms and dissemination of the Glossary.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

14. The Fourth Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region was held in the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 9 and 10 May 2016.

B. PARTICIPANTS

15. The meeting was attended by 25 participants, including representatives from several United Nations agencies; national statistics offices of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, the Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen; national women’s and gender equality ministries; and civil society. The list of participants is presented in the annex to this report.

C. EVALUATION

16. Twenty-four participants completed the meeting evaluation form, which included questions on organizational and technical aspects. The results were as follows:

   • 96 per cent of respondents rated the quality of the workshop as “good” and “very good”; only 4 per cent assessed it as “average”;
• 78 per cent indicated that their expectations from this meeting were “met”, and 17 per cent that they were “partially met”;

• 92 per cent indicated that the workshop was “relevant” to their work, and only 9 per cent assessed it as “average”;

• 91 per cent indicated that the meeting was “good” and “very good” in upgrading their skills and acquiring new information that would be beneficial for their future work, and 9 per cent assessed it as “average”; 

• 95 per cent reported they have benefited from information sharing during the workshop;

• 87 per cent said that they had established “new and useful networking relations” as a result of the workshop;

• 82 per cent assessed the clarity of presentations as “good” and “very good”, and 18 per cent assessed it as “average”;

• 74 per cent rated the quality of written materials distributed by organizers during the meeting as “good” and “very good”, 22 per cent assessed it as “average”, and only 4 per cent as “poor”;

• 65 per cent assessed the organization quality as “very good” and 35 per cent assessed it as “good”;

• 83 per cent thought that the duration of the workshop was adequate.
Annex

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