Committee on Statistics Ninth Session High Level Session

Statement UNFPA APRO Regional Director, Mr. Pio Smith

Wednesday 11 December (3:15 - 5:00 PM)

3 minutes

Madam Chair (TBC),

Data is the fuel that powers progress across all the SDGs. It requires prioritization, investment and coordination. By forging transformational national data partnerships, we can unlock a powerful data dividend with a $32 return for every $1 invested. This will drive significant benefits for people and the planet, unlocking a more equal world, particularly for women and girls, who bear the greatest burden of inequality.

At UNFPA, we recognize that data isn't just about numbers.

Our strength lies in bringing numbers to life to inform and affirm the rights and choices of every woman and girl. Through data, we reveal the unseen and prioritize those left behind.

Data now also allows us to see clearly the unacceptable rates at which women are dying while giving life and the inequalities that are quite literally killing them.

Through census, health surveys, innovative data platforms and research, UNFPA contributes to unveiling the unseen.

We are supporting Member States in strengthening their population data systems, including modernizing population censuses, while enhancing the quality and availability of data outputs by leveraging the potential of geospatial technologies and data integration.

We prioritize areas where data is lacking AND where it contributes to intense human suffering, including the preventable deaths of women and newborns, and GBV.

This includes emergency settings. In Asia and the Pacific, it is critical to ensure evidence-based disaster risk reduction, and effective emergency preparedness and response. To this end, in partnership with OCHA, we ensure the availability and quality of updated Common Operational Datasets for Population Statistics to provide disaggregated population data to guide disaster preparedness, response, and recovery strategies.

And for SIDS, let's not forget that data-driven human capital development requires both international support and local commitment. The cost of data collection is relatively high in SIDS, due in part to remote geographies and the need for larger samples. South-South Cooperation can play a key role in this work and help boost the capacity of national statistical systems.

With more than eight women dying every hour from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, UNFPA is also committed to enhancing health management information systems, including maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response systems - aimed at improving the collection and use of data to inform the design of lifesaving interventions.

At the same time, the prevalence of GBV remains alarmingly high. Most figures are just estimates as many cases go unreported. That is why our kNOwVAWdata initiative, supported by Australia, strengthens capacities to measure the prevalence of violence against women. It aims to improve the availability and quality of data to inform effective policies and save lives.

Harmful practices, such as FGM, child marriage, and femicide, remain poorly measured and need to be integrated in national data systems.

Distinguished delegates, Dear Friends,

For over 50 years, UNFPA's work has centered on enhancing the capacities of National Statistical Offices and strengthening statistical systems to ensure no one is left behind.

At this critical moment when women's rights are under threat, we must remain focused and fully accountable to the needs of women and girls including the marginalized.

When data and health systems work for those on the margins, they work for everyone. That is how we accelerate progress for all.

So too with partnership. Let us together intensify our efforts to collect and use data to inform public policy focused on reaching those furthest left behind, and to make HER visible - whoever and wherever SHE might be. Only then can we harness the true power of data, and empower HER to become a transformative force in advancing sustainable development.

Thank you.