Overview

ESCAP will collaborate with UN Women and other development agencies to organize the above-mentioned workshop. The workshop aims to advance the production and dissemination of gender-sensitive statistics in Asia and the Pacific in support of evidence-based planning and policy-making by governments and other stakeholders to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on sex-disaggregation of data for the global monitoring framework and the list of indicators for the SDGs. The workshop is intended as a joint UN event under the auspices of the Working Group on Gender Statistics, Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women of the Regional Coordination Mechanism.

More specifically, the 3-day workshop is to bring together experts in policy analysis and statistics from Asia and the Pacific and seek to identify:

Required sex-disaggregation and its possible breakdowns by other relevant population characteristics for key SDG indicators on the basis of national and regional priorities for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women of the 2030 Agenda.

Key gaps in the current production and dissemination of data for the required disaggregation and priorities of regional support for improvements.

The outcomes will guide the efforts by national statistical systems in integrating a gender perspective in their data production and dissemination, as well as the overall statistical capacity development support. In addition, these outcomes are expected to assist UN agencies and other development partners to have more focus on their support to member States in the region in strengthening the collection, dissemination and use of gender-responsive statistics, including methodological development.

The outcomes are also expected to provide regional perspectives in the global work on methodological developments on data disaggregation for the SDG indicators as well as discussions on priority setting for statistical capacity strengthening.

The rest of the note provides a short introduction, followed by a discussion on three sets of issues that the workshop is to address. On the basis of the discussion, the note provides the objectives and expected outcomes of the workshop, structure of a tentative programme, as well as considerations for preparation.
I. Introduction

The 2030 Agenda enshrines the ambitious vision of leaving no one behind to “free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet.” In implementing this vision, the global monitoring framework must reflect the opportunities and development outcomes for the population groups that are left behind.

In terms of achieving gender equality, this has been done by including indicators that measure the nine targets under Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda as well as disaggregating data for these and other indicators to identify the population groups who might be at varying levels of attaining the relevant targets. The ambition of the statistical community is that “SDG indicators should be disaggregated where relevant by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.”

II. The issues

Several issues arise regarding the implementation of the disaggregation of the global monitoring framework and adapting it to national, regional and sub-regional monitoring. Key issues are below:

1) Relevant sex-disaggregation and/or combination of disaggregation?

There are two broad types of disaggregation mentioned in the global monitoring framework. The first type lists multiple population groups by which data for an indicator should be disaggregated. But the global framework does not specify how the multiple population groups are to be considered in producing disaggregated data. For instance, Indicator [1.1.1] states “Proportion of population below international poverty line disaggregated by sex, age group, employment status, and geographical location (urban/rural)”. When only three population characteristics are considered, data disaggregation can be carried out in the following ways:

Table 1 Illustration of parallel disaggregation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Geographic location</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (a)</td>
<td>Rural (c)</td>
<td>Employed (e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (b)</td>
<td>Urban (d)</td>
<td>Unemployed (f)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The parallel disaggregation produces estimates of poverty ratio for three pairs of population groups in parallel: men and women; rural and urban residents; employed and unemployed people. These estimates address the question of whether poverty ratios differ between each pair of the population groups (see Table 1).

Alternatively the disaggregation can be conducted in a nested manner, i.e. cross disaggregation by sex and location. The result will be poverty ratio for rural men, rural women, urban men and urban women.
Here the disaggregated data address the question of whether male-female differences in poverty ratio would vary by geographic location (see Table 2.a) sex by geographic location). Similarly, if the policy question is whether male-female differences in poverty ratio varies by employment status, cross segregation by sex and employment status can be conducted as shown in Table 2. b).

Table 2 Illustration of two-way nested disaggregation

a) Sex by geographic location

b) Sex by employment status

Following the same reasoning, if male-female differences in poverty ratio differ by geographic location, a further question can be asked regarding whether the sex-location-related gaps vary by employment status. Addressing this question would require three-way disaggregation, as illustrated in Table 3.
Further disaggregation of data allows for the possibility of identifying sub-populations falling farthest behind on the targets, so as to inform the design of policies and programmes of leaving no one behind.

The proposal of the global monitoring framework sometimes mentions only one population characteristic for disaggregation, as is the case with Indicator 8.3.1 “Share of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex” or Indicator 5.a.1.a states “Percentage of people with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land (out of total agricultural population), by sex.”. But if the overarching principle of disaggregation is applied, other population characteristics that are policy-relevant can be considered for disaggregation, such as age group, education level, race, etc. In this case, the issue of nested disaggregation arises as additional population characteristics need to be considered for disaggregation simultaneously.

The same questions about parallel or nested disaggregation apply for many other indicators in the proposed global monitoring framework. For instance, Indicator 5.4.1 states “Percentage of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age group and location.” But should the data be disaggregated in parallel or in a nested manner? Answers to the questions would depend upon what population groups, or subpopulations within country context, have been identified to be at disadvantage and are in most need of addressing. The answers may vary across goal areas within countries as well as across subregions and regions. On the other hand, some characteristics, such as living in rural area, have been known to be associated disadvantage for a wide range of issues and across developing countries.
In Asia and the Pacific, social vulnerabilities and inequalities have been identified in a broad range of development areas, including SDG 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”, SDG 2 “Zero Hunger”, SDG 3 “Good health and wellbeing”, SDG 4 “Quality education” and SDG 5 “Gender equality”, SDG 8 “Decent work and economic growth”, SDG 10 “Reduce inequalities” and SDG Goal 11: "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

The Regional Core Set of Gender Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, endorsed by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics in March 2015, lists “Rural women” as a separate target population for the indicators. The separate listing effectively means a two-way disaggregation for the relevant indicators. It would be necessary to find out whether and where more than these two levels are required to address the policy priorities.

The gender dimension is included two regionally agreed development frameworks. One is the “Incheon Strategy to ‘Make the Right Real’ for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific”, governments in the region have also committed to achieving a set of disability-inclusive goals and targets, with a list of indicators to monitor progress. The other is the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, which also has a set of goals, targets and indicators. In both cases, the indicators already specify sex-disaggregation where appropriate. In any case, the search for answers to the question of what is required disaggregation should aim at responding to policy demands at the country level, although there might be commonalities across the region, subregion, or other country grouping characteristics (e.g. small island developing states, land locked developing countries, etc). As a starting point, it is important to examine existing empirical evidence on how gender disparities on issues that are represented by the global indicators might vary by other population characteristics. For instance, if poverty ratios are different for women and men, are such differences bigger or smaller in rural vis-à-vis urban areas and/or across various age groups and/or racial groups? Answers to questions like this would provide the basis for deciding on what types of disaggregation are desirable in the national, sub-regional and regional contexts.

2) Sufficiency of existing statistical work for the desired sex-disaggregation and combination of disaggregation

The required disaggregation, especially in case of nested disaggregation, has immediate implications for data production. Some of the required data disaggregation for the indicators of interest are already available, or easily made available with current data production. In contrast, other required disaggregation will not be possible without significant additional data production, or changes in the way data are collected, processed and disseminated, or both. Where data come from sample surveys, nested disaggregation is more stringent on the sample size in order to yield reliable estimates, which also means high costs for data collection.

If there are gaps in the current data production in view of the desired disaggregation, it will be important to gauge such gaps, which would inform prioritization for improvements. This gauging should be guided by the discussions on the required disaggregation for the global indicators. It can also consider any additional national or subregional indicators that will have been identified as critical to address issues of gender equality and empowerment of women.

Various development partners and national stakeholders may have already collected information on the production of data on gender-related indicators, including sex-disaggregation of data for such indicators. It is important that any assessment should build on such existing information.
3) **Additional methodological development and data production to support the desired sex-disaggregation and combination of disaggregation**

The assessment of current practices would inform the identification of further work that is required for producing and disseminating data for the required sex-disaggregation and combination of disaggregation. This can include research and development of relevant statistical concepts, methodologies and guidelines. For instance, sex-disaggregation may be combined with more categories of geographic location than the currently-specified rural/urban dichotomy. In this case, it will be essential to draw on the experiences of countries to come up with the categorization of geographic location that are relevant to national policy-making.

The changes could also be the revision and updating of data collection instruments to ensure that information is collected to identify the relevant population groups. In addition, when data are sourced from sample surveys, it is crucial that the sampling has taken into consideration the adequate size of the subpopulations of interest so as to produce the estimates of acceptable precision. While more detailed disaggregation often requires more data, this sometimes may be achieved by combining data from different sources. For instance, the technique of Small Area Estimation has been used to draw on data from sample surveys and population censuses to produce poverty estimates of acceptable precision for relatively small population groups and administrative areas that sample surveys alone cannot.

The global indicator list mentions “income” as another stratifying variable for disaggregation. This information is typically collected through household-based surveys as well as in some cases population and housing censuses. It would avoid response burden by relying on the rich information collected through such surveys when the information is needed for disaggregating indicators from other data sources, such as school and student surveys. This would require changes in the setup of data collection, processing and dissemination, among others.

Search for solutions to meet the data requirements should also consider non-conventional data sources for official statistics, including various types of big data as well as data collected by non-government agencies. This should be expanded to cover the issue of using other existing data, including administrative and survey data, for effective advocacy and policy analysis. In particular, it should include access to microdata for analysis by researchers and policy analysts.

*The issue of integrating gender perspective in statistical work*

It must be pointed out sex-disaggregation is but one, albeit very important, step in the production and dissemination of the statistics that is required for informing the planning and implementation of policies to achieve gender equality. In the long term, the statistical community must integrate a gender perspective in the design and implementation of statistical work, the ultimate goal of which is to ensure that formulation, implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming policies are informed by accurate and reliable gender-sensitive statistics. Production of gender-sensitive statistics entails a range of important steps including examining and addressing possible gender bias and false gender assumptions in concepts, definitions, as well as in each process of statistical production and dissemination. Additionally, making differences between women and men, and heterogeneity among women and among men, visible in statistics is a prerequisite to ensure that gender mainstreaming policies rightly target the most vulnerable groups and fully reflect realities in a society.
III. Objectives and outputs of the workshop

The proposed 3-day workshop will discuss the above issues with practitioners, users and producers of data (relevant national government agencies - national statistical office, National Women’s Machinery, Ministry of Education Health, Planning, other relevant line ministries, UN agencies) and seek to identify

- Required sex-disaggregation in combination with other population characteristics for key SDG indicators on the basis of national and regional priorities for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women of the 2030 Agenda
- Key gaps in the current production and dissemination of data for the required disaggregation and priorities of regional support for improvements

The above will guide the efforts by national statistical systems to strengthen their data production, as well as the overall statistical capacity development support, and a common understanding by UN agencies and other development partners on gender statistics and sex disaggregated data collection and use, including methodological development.

IV. Format and structure of the workshop

The workshop will consist of a combination of presentations by experts and discussions.

The structure is proposed as follows:

Part I: Scene setting

1. Introduction of workshop objectives, expected outputs and structure

2. Overview (papers/presentations):
   - Integrating a gender perspective into statistics: requirements for sex-disaggregated data (ESCAP/SIAP)
   - Data disaggregation for global SDG indicators: overarching principles and work plan (UNSD/UN Women TBC)
   - Regional core set of gender indicators and current status of production and dissemination of sex-disaggregation data in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/SIAP)

Part II: Deep dive into specific goal areas

A series of sessions, each focusing on an area of SDGs and addressing the following issues

- What types of sex-disaggregation (in combination with other population characteristics) are required to address policy priorities specific SDG areas in Asia and the Pacific? What would be the minimum requirements for such disaggregation? Review of (country, subregional, regional)
evidence on sex-related disparities regarding this goal area, including the variability of such disparities by other population characteristics.

- What are country practices in producing and disseminating the above required data disaggregation in Asia and the Pacific? What opportunities are there for such practices to be replicated in other countries?
- What existing methodologies can be used to improve production of data of required disaggregation? What further methodological developments are necessary? What do these mean for additional financial and human resources?

TENTATIVE LIST OF TOPICS: TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT AGENCIES. PARALLEL SESSIONS CAN BE CONSIDERED

3. Tentative Goal/Target areas include:

- Participation and decision-making in political and public life
- Economic participation
- Health
- Education
- Violence against women and girls and harmful practices
- Environment, including disaster risk reduction

Part III: Putting all together

4. “Minimum” sex-disaggregation (in combination with other population characteristics):

Commonalities across goal areas and countries (including patterns of variation across groups of goals and countries)

5. Gaps in current production of data of required disaggregation:

Commonalities in data collection, compilation, processing and dissemination

6. Opportunities for improving sex-disaggregated data for SDG indicators

7. Priorities for methodological development, training, and resource mobilisation

8. Mining existing data for informed advocacy and policy analysis: Role of non-conventional data sources, access to microdata.

Part IV: Ways forward

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