

# Summary and conclusions



**UNITED NATIONS  
9<sup>TH</sup> GLOBAL FORUM  
ON GENDER STATISTICS**  
29-31 AUGUST 2023  
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA



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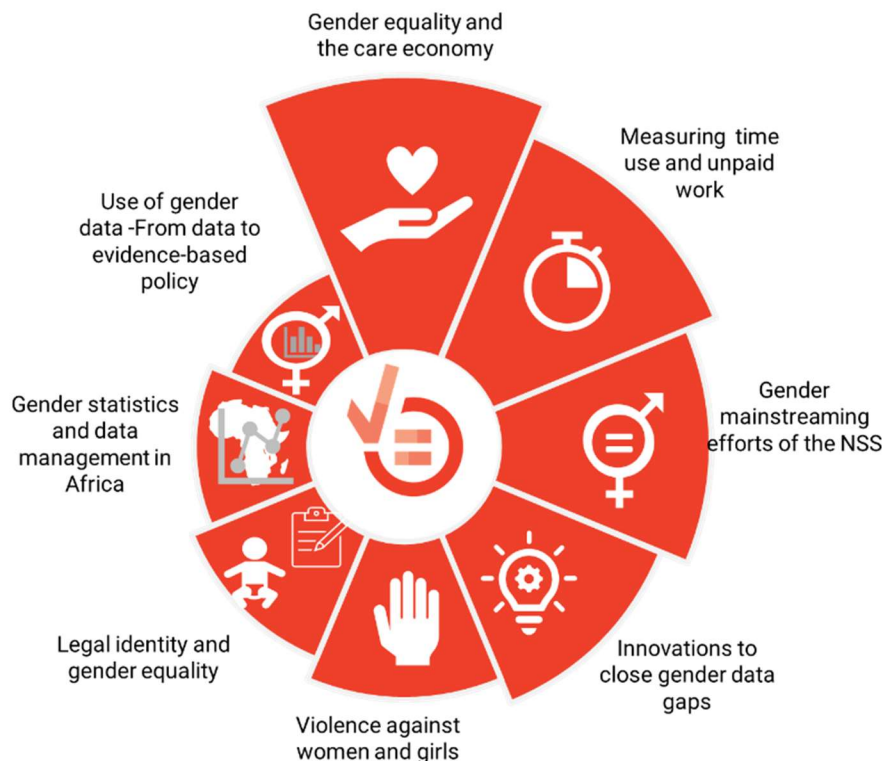
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## Summary and conclusions

### 9<sup>th</sup> United Nations Global Forum on Gender Statistics

The 9th United Nations Global Forum on Gender Statistics was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division and hosted by Statistics South Africa, with the central theme: "*Measuring What We Value - Gender Statistics for an Informed Care Economy.*" The event drew participation from a diverse audience, including approximately 250 expert users and producers of gender statistics. Live broadcasting was also provided through the event's [webpage](#).

#### Key themes explored during the Forum



The Forum included two high-level panels and eight thematic sessions, with a profound emphasis placed on recognizing the pivotal role of care and care work in fostering well-being and achieving gender equality. Participants took stock of advancements in measuring various facets of gender equality, identified persistent gender data gaps, and acknowledged the ongoing strides in integrating the gender perspective into all statistical processes and thematic domains.

Furthermore, attendees celebrated the innovative approaches adopted by National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and other data experts to fill gender data gaps, acknowledging the central role of gender data in accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Forum also provided a valuable platform to exchange and learn from best practices in gender statistics, with a particular focus on experiences from the African region.

The Forum provided a remarkable opportunity to foster collaboration by bringing together a wide-ranging audience encompassing experts and stakeholders from various fields including gender, trade, national accounts, climate change, and civil registration. The next Global Forum on Gender Statistics will be organized in 2025 by the United Nations Statistics Division under the Global Gender Statistics Programme and the guidance of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics.

## Progress in the solidification of gender statistics within national statistical systems, thanks to enhanced cooperation among users and producers was recognised and celebrated.

Discussions at the Forum commemorated the significant progress made in the solidification of gender statistics within national statistical systems. These accomplishments owe their success partially to the enhanced cooperation and coordination among users and producers of gender statistics.



The establishment of dedicated coordinating entities for gender statistics within national statistical offices has also played a pivotal role—remarkably, 85% of countries have established a focal point or desk for gender statistics, half of which have also instituted dedicated coordinating bodies. The presence of legislation pertaining to gender statistics further underscores the progress in this critical area.

Participants welcomed the results of the *2022 Global Review on Gender Statistics* which showed global progress in mainstreaming gender in official statistics, reflecting the growing recognition of the importance of gender-sensitive data for informed policymaking and development initiatives in traditional and emerging areas and using both traditional and modern data sources. Among other findings, the 2022 Global Review showed that the production of gender statistics for traditional themes has become more regular than a decade ago. Highlights included a marked increase in the proportion of countries regularly producing data on violence against women (about 20 percentage points) and on morbidity (28 percentage points) and a modest increase in the proportion of countries regularly producing satellite accounts for unpaid household services (3 percentage points). Also, new themes are being explored from a gender perspective; and a wider variety of data sources are being used. This progress has been accompanied and boosted by the development of statistical frameworks in the past decade. The 2022 Global Review also highlighted the tremendous untapped potential for gender statistics in existing data sources, in particular geospatial data, trade, business, and financial records.


The development of gender statistics has taken a prominent position in Africa's statistical development agenda. There has been a notable increase in the recognition and appreciation of gender statistics by policymakers, researchers, and citizens alike. National Statistical Offices have responded by implementing extensive dissemination plans introducing gender-themed reports and publications, with a primary focus on ensuring these studies reach various government institutions with a vested interest in gender-related matters.

There is a clear commitment from countries in Africa to advancing legislation that supports the production of gender statistics. Noteworthy are the efforts to adapt legislation and policies related to civil registration and vital statistics, aimed at addressing barriers to birth, marriage, and death registration. These actions collectively create a robust enabling environment for promoting gender-inclusive legal identity.

**Challenges include the exploitation of existing data sources, in particular administrative data, while improving the use of non-traditional data sources, as well as increased demand, tight resources, and persistent gender data gaps.**

The challenge posed by the increased demand from policymakers, researchers, and citizens for more frequent, more timely, and more disaggregated data was starkly acknowledged —as well as the limitations of available resources in increasingly constrained fiscal environments. Among the challenges identified, the exploitation of existing data sources, in particular administrative data, while making use of non-traditional data sources, stood out. Other challenges underlined by speakers during the Forum include a weak policy space where legal and financial environments pose barriers, persistent gender data gaps and lack of access or limited use of gender data. Discussions at the Forum highlighted that traditional time-use surveys, are facing low response rates, as many other household surveys that are key to producing gender statistics.





In the context of collection, analysis, and dissemination of data concerning all forms of violence against women and girls, the need for additional efforts to enhance data availability for specific population groups was underscored. These groups include women beyond reproductive age, women living with disabilities, migrant women, and indigenous women. Furthermore, Forum participants recognized the imperative to incorporate the perspective of perpetrators into the analysis of violence against women. Additionally, it was stressed that advancing methodological research in response to emerging forms of violence, particularly technology-facilitated violence against women is urgent.

It was identified that gender statistics not officially produced by National Statistical Systems include both traditional and emerging topics across all the three pillars of development, for example, trade and commerce, climate change and environment, forced displacement, and homelessness.

Presenters acknowledged that many instruments used traditionally to produce trade statistics have remained gender-blind, as they have focused on observational units that primarily revolve around businesses. However, micro-linking various datasets can play a crucial role, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the gender-specific dynamics within trade. Nevertheless, there are significant challenges in achieving data system integration between different agencies, as this would require enhanced data sharing while upholding confidentiality standards to strike a balance between transparency and privacy. Another major hurdle in improving data integration is the lack of a common identifier between various agencies, and irregular data collection practices, particularly in informal cross-border trade.

The discussion on how to integrate a gender perspective into climate change statistics highlighted the challenges faced by national statistical offices in developing measures to better comprehend how individual characteristics and gender-specific roles and responsibilities influence the way people experience and contribute to environmental phenomena, as well as the broader implications of climate change across various stages of life. While there have been some attempts to bridge data gaps on the nexus of gender and the environment, such as the development of specialized surveys, the linkage of pre-existing datasets using unique identifiers, the utilization of geospatial information, regressions to explore the nature of associations, composite indexes, and big data, further methodological guidance and increased collaboration between the gender statistics and environmental statistics communities are essential to advance understanding in this critical domain.

## Areas of improvement identified at the 9<sup>th</sup> UN Global Forum on Gender Statistics.



### Mainstreaming gender into existing statistical processes

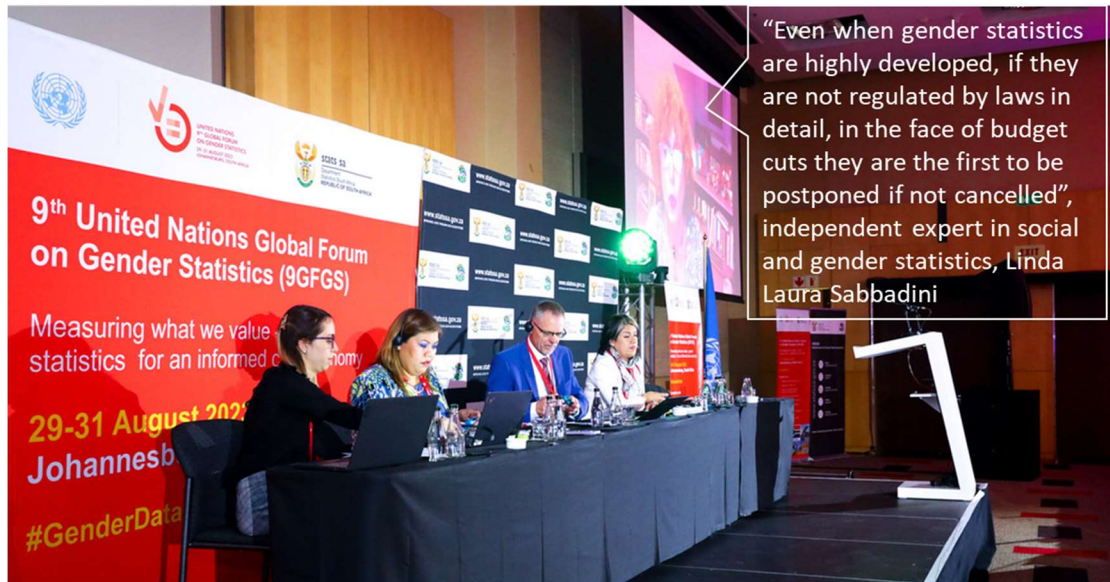
Forum participants agreed that improving the production of official statistics with a gender perspective is crucial to better understand and address gender disparities in various aspects of society. To advance the effort of mainstreaming gender into existing statistical processes, the official statistical community will need an expanded set of skills in their human resources, a more robust IT infrastructure, intensified internal collaboration and coordination with external stakeholders, not only in their role of users but also as producers of thematic data.

At the national statistical office level, it is essential to invest in building capacities within the institution. This involves providing staff with the necessary training and expertise to collect, analyse, and report data with a gender lens. Moreover, the development of guidance documents on how to incorporate a gender approach into traditional and emerging areas can serve as a valuable resource for statisticians. Additionally, providing interviewer training is crucial to ensure that data collection processes are conducted in a gender-sensitive manner, reducing potential biases and errors in data.

At the national statistical system level, coordination among various government agencies and organizations is essential. Collaboration can help streamline data collection efforts, reduce duplication, and improve data quality. Raising awareness about the importance of gender-disaggregated data and its impact on policymaking is another critical step. This can be achieved through public awareness campaigns and engagement with policymakers to highlight the significance of gender-focused statistics in designing evidence-based policies. Moreover, disseminating gender statistics to a wider audience, including researchers, civil society organizations, and the general public, can foster transparency and accountability in addressing gender inequalities. Increasing the availability of data, making it easily accessible, and ensuring that it covers a wide range of gender-related indicators will enable stakeholders to make informed decisions and monitor progress towards gender equality more effectively.

## Secure resources

Gender statistics should be recognized as equally important as other statistical areas, given their significance in informing policy decisions. Speakers and participants pointed out that securing adequate resources for gender statistics is imperative to address persisting challenges. Legal and financial barriers continue to impede progress, with gender statistics often suffering from chronic underfunding. Creating enabling environments, such as gender-responsive statistical budgeting, is essential to mainstream the gender perspective throughout the entire statistical production planning process.



To ensure sustained advancement, it is crucial to enforce legislation that protects the gains made in gender data collection. This may include laws mandating the collection of specialised surveys, specifying penalties for non-compliance, and calendaring statistical activities to ensure consistency and reliability of data. Moreover, safeguarding the regular production of gender statistics from budget cuts is vital; any discontinuation or reduction of gender statistics programs hinders progress in understanding and addressing gender disparities.

## Improve traditional data sources

Discussions at the Forum stressed the benefits of using all types of available data to produce gender statistics, acknowledging their strengths and limitations. For instance, the combination of population census data with administrative data, surveys, and geospatial information, has the potential to support designs that better identify relevant needs of women and men.

The pivotal role of establishing standards in fostering enabling environments and promoting the production of gender data stood out prominently during the sessions. The Forum acknowledged significant strides in the development of statistical standards for measuring critical aspects such as femicide, corruption, time use, and work. Consequently, there was a resounding call to sustain and further advance this crucial work, recognizing its significance in enhancing the quality and relevance of gender-related data.

To strengthen the quality and relevance of administrative records, there is a pressing need for methodological tools and training. These tools should be designed to equip data producers and analysts with the skills and knowledge to apply a gender lens to administrative data. By doing so, the data collected can provide a more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics within various sectors.

Declining participation in surveys poses a significant threat to the quality and representativeness of data and the possibility of disaggregation. To address this challenge, strategies need to be developed to encourage greater participation, especially among hard-to-reach populations. While participants at the Forum echoed concerns about conducting time-use surveys as they are complex and costly in their traditional form, options showcased for the modernization of the production of time-use statistics through innovative use of technologies were warmly welcomed.

The improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems was highlighted as essential for advancing gender equality and promoting fundamental rights, inclusion, opportunities, and prosperity for all. Gender-responsive CRVS systems play a pivotal role in ensuring that everyone's birth, death, marriage, and divorce are accurately recorded and recognized. By enhancing these systems, governments can better protect women's rights, particularly in contexts where marriage and divorce registration can significantly impact their legal and financial standing.

Participants in the Forum recognized the progress achieved in measuring violence against women and girls by utilizing administrative data sources as well as survey data and acknowledged the potential use of nontraditional data sources such as social media. It was highlighted that improving the measurement of violence against women requires a multifaceted approach. Ethical considerations must be at the forefront, ensuring that data collection methods prioritize the safety and well-being of survivors while maintaining their anonymity and dignity. Additionally, it is important to include perceptions in the measurement process, as these subjective experiences offer crucial insights into the nature and impact of violence. Going beyond tracking the level and trends of violence, an intersectional approach should be adopted, acknowledging that women's experiences of violence are shaped by multiple factors, such as age, race, socioeconomic status, and disability. Moreover, measuring the state's response to the problem is vital to provide a comprehensive picture of the efforts to eliminate violence against women. An emerging area of concern is violence against women and girls facilitated by the use of technology. Several countries attending the Forum have started attempts to measure and address this issue. However, advancing in this critical domain demands further research and increased engagement with different stakeholders.





## Integrate data sources

Ongoing efforts of the international community to develop tools to tease out the gender component in non-traditional areas of statistics, such as business and trade statistics and environment and climate change statistics were welcomed, including the practical work of a few pioneer countries, which generates useful knowledge and lessons. Applying the gender perspective in areas that were traditionally and mistakenly taken as gender-neutral does not come without challenges. The statistical exercise necessitates linking a variety of data sources, which may sit in different government institutions and may be unarticulated at many levels.



The Forum discussed the relevance of micro linkages between datasets to produce gender statistics capable of describing the complex dynamics that shape gender disparities. This involves connecting individual-level data across different sources (such as trade records, labour force surveys, business records, social surveys, health records, etc). By linking these datasets, researchers and policymakers can gain deeper insights into the interplay between various factors affecting gender disparities, allowing for more nuanced policy interventions tailored to specific needs. Ensuring data interoperability was pointed out as vital for progress towards seamless access to data produced by different actors of the National Statistical Systems (NSS).

Discussions at the Forum agreed that georeferenced data can significantly enhance gender statistics by integrating location-based information. Georeferencing data on individuals as well as on environmental conditions, access to services, and infrastructure can illuminate spatial patterns of gender disparities. For example, it can help identify areas with inadequate healthcare or education facilities, pinpointing regions where targeted interventions are most needed.

## Innovate and modernize

One key path for harnessing the power of data for gender equality is to embrace open data and modern data collection techniques. Data-sharing innovations such as open data portals, data collaboratives, data cooperatives and data commons, play a pivotal role in improving access and openness to data. Creating platforms and partnerships that enable the secure sharing of gender data among government agencies, civil society organizations, and researchers can foster collaboration and lead to more robust and up-to-date gender statistics.

Using digital technologies addresses several of the challenges faced by household surveys by offering various options to respond, reducing respondent burden, improving the response rates, increasing representativeness, and improving communication with users. The latest United Nations guidelines for time-use surveys were presented as they provide important solutions to improve the production of time-use data using light survey tools and modern technologies.



Different avenues for the digitization of systems within NSOs and line ministries, including civil registration were also discussed. This involves developing IT data infrastructure, expanding technical capacities through workforce upskilling, and identifying scalable and replicable solutions. The integration of gender dimensions throughout the entire data value chain, coupled with an intersectional approach, ensures that gender considerations are consistently factored into data collection, analysis, interpretation and communication.

## Research and experiment

The value of non-traditional data, such as citizen-generated data, was also highlighted as a means to fill remaining data gaps and to shed light on important gender issues that might be overlooked by official statistics. As an example, the case of citizen-generated data on LGBTQ people being integrated into official statistics in some countries was presented, in particular as a tool for sensitizing stakeholders. Engaging citizens in data collection and sharing fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among communities, making them active participants in the decision-making process.

Participants also discussed the use of projections and simulations to fill in gender data gaps. Simulations can assess the potential impact of policy changes on gender-related outcomes and can optimize the allocation of resources to maximize the impact of closing gender gaps. For example, gender statistics can be used to model how investments in the care economy might affect women's workforce participation and earnings.

## Collaborate and bridge silos

Participants stressed the need for collaboration with stakeholders in data collection, analysis, and application, both inside and outside of government. They recognized that not all stakeholders fully grasp how different themes relate to gender equality. To enhance gender statistics, close interaction between gender statisticians and experts is crucial to establish a shared understanding of relevance and to reach consensus on key concepts and definitions.

Acknowledging that National Statistical Offices (NSOs) have roles beyond data collection can improve data access and communication, fostering engagement. Raising awareness about gender issues and the importance of gender statistics can lead to joint efforts and cost-sharing among various entities. User-producer dialogues on gender-related data were deemed essential for data' relevance.

Strong gender data serve as a foundation for policymaking, especially in addressing issues like gender-based violence, femicide, and increased teenage pregnancy including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants highlighted horizontal cooperation among regions as a potent tool for increasing availability of gender statistics. Sharing experiences and best practices among regions through peer-to-peer learning can strengthen gender data production.

"Statistics are central to identifying needs, setting goals and monitoring the achievement of these goals, that inform the normative frameworks that the African Union Commission establishes."

Prudence Ngwenya  
Director of the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate  
African Union Commission



## Communicate and elevate the role and value of gender statistics

"Reliable and credible data is the bedrock for policy formulation and should play a role in informing, planning, costing, implementation and reviewing of programs and policies."

Advocate Mikateko Joyce Maluleke  
Director General  
Department of Women, Youth and  
Persons with Disabilities  
South Africa



An essential point discussed is the need to make gender data more accessible and user-friendly. This involves presenting concrete examples of how gender data can impact people's lives. To achieve this, it's crucial to invest in the later stages of the data value chain or data process, making data easily

understandable and demonstrating its practical benefits. Customizing data for specific audiences, such as policymakers or the public, can boost engagement. Visual tools like infographics and interactive dashboards, rather than traditional publications, can make gender statistics more engaging and help convey their societal significance.

Speakers also emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the real-world implications of gender statistics. This can be achieved through statistical literacy programs for the public, policymakers, and specialized users. Collaborating with academia and civil society can further promote the dissemination and use of gender data.

Increasing awareness, demand, and utilization of gender statistics is vital for elevating their importance among decision-makers. It's crucial to highlight the value and relevance of gender statistics in shaping policies and programs, ensuring they receive the attention they deserve within the National Statistical System (NSS).

## Data on care and on time-use offer a way forward to more inclusive measures of progress

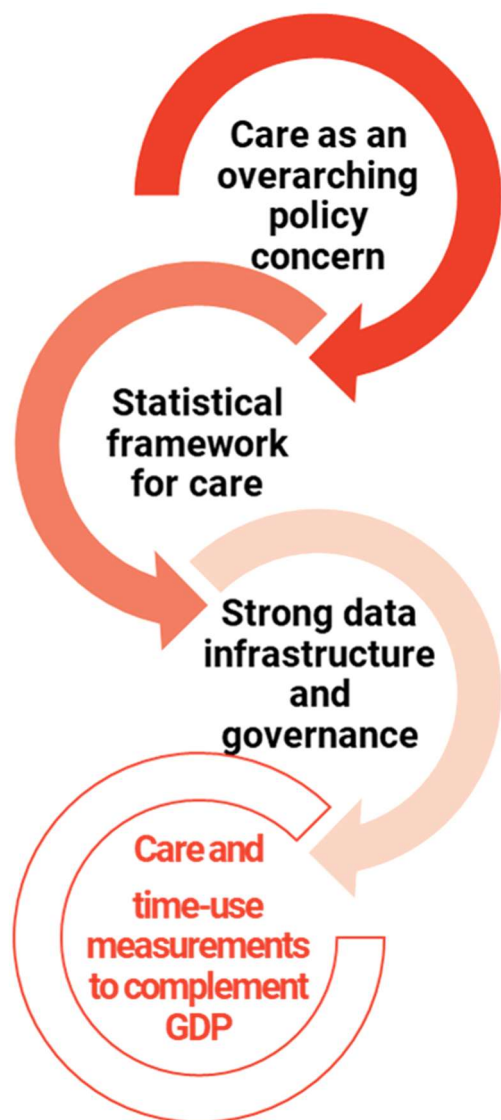


Discussions at the Forum highlighted the role of care, recalling that most of the care work worldwide is unpaid and done by women and girls, perpetuating economic inequality between women and men. Speakers and participants discussed the interlinkages of the care economy with gender equality in a context of significant demographic changes, such as population aging, increased and more complex migration dynamics, and denuclearization of family structures. Participants welcomed a broad and comprehensive statistical approach to conceive care and the care economy, that includes data on care demands, provision, quality, and infrastructure, among other data needs.

Care was recognised as an overarching policy concern, that touches upon the three pillars of development, being not only a labour market issue but explicitly interrelated

to gender, economics, human rights, education, health, migration, environment, and disasters. It was noted that conceptual and statistical frameworks have been developed for some of these themes, thus, a detailed review of these frameworks is needed to document their intersection with care in order to have a comprehensive picture of care and of the care economy.

However, care is unrecognized in our current economic accounting systems. In this context, a statistical framework for care, and in particular the measurement of unpaid care work are needed complements to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to measure progress and inclusive and sustainable well-being.



Forum participants highlighted the importance of better utilizing time-use data to link social and economic issues, for example through the calculation of indicators expressed in time units and also for the production of satellite or extended accounts on unpaid household and care work, national time transfer accounts, or social matrices, as part of official statistics.

Forum participants acknowledged that strong data infrastructures and governance, in addition to multidisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration, are key elements to measure and monitor care and the care economy from a gender perspective. In addition, an intersectional approach was highlighted as key to understanding care, including characteristics of both care givers and receivers, who might be migrants, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, the need for statistical concepts and definitions on care was voiced clearly. Integrated data systems with a gender lens will be needed to link different data sources on economic, environmental, social, and geospatial information.

National statistical offices and their partners were encouraged to make full use of new and updated tools and manuals to produce high-quality time-use statistics, including the [Minimum Harmonized Instrument](#), the [time-use data hub](#), and the survey module to measure time-use among children, all grounded on the same international

standards endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission.



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