



# GENDER STATISTICS

Demographic and Social Statistics, UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/default.htm>

The Statistics Division's work on gender statistics was initiated in the early 1980s, mid-way into the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985). The programme began in response to the call of the first International World Conference on Women, in 1975, for more statistics on the status of women, and has been shaped by demands from three subsequent international conferences on women, and other conferences, such as the World Summit for Social Development (1995), and the International Conference on Population and Development (1994). Following this initial orientation, the programme has been geared to users' needs, and has provided technical support to women and gender units of the United Nations funds and programmes; statistical units of regional organizations; and national statistical offices (NSOs).

The gender statistics programme was designed to address three main problem areas:

- The need for data collection systems to take gender issues into account in all stages of data production;
- The limited availability and accessibility of gender statistics;
- The under-utilization of gender statistics.

These problems have, to a large extent, been addressed with activities in the review of concepts and methods, compilation and dissemination of gender statistics; technical assistance and training. The success of the programme in responding to users needs, gave the Statistics Division an unparalleled recognition in this field, resulting in strong partnerships with counterpart agencies, and coordinated support for the development of gender statistics.

## Methodological work

The methodological work, in gender statistics, has involved reviewing concepts and methods currently used in the collection of official statistics, and identifying ways of integrating gender perspectives in order to avoid biases in the

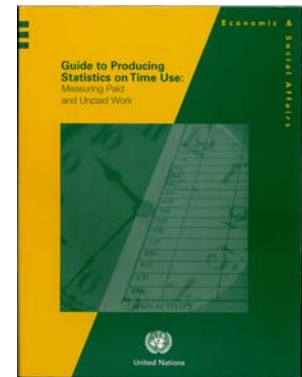
data collection, presentation and dissemination. Several manuals and reports have been prepared from these reviews. The first was *Improving Concepts and Methods for Statistics and Indicators on the Situation of Women* (1984), which identified potential biases for which additional guidance was needed. Others include *Improving Statistics on Indicators on Women Using Household Surveys* (1988), and technical reports on women in household surveys and measuring women in the informal sector.

Another aspect of the work is the development of methods to collect data on particular gender issues of concern,

such as the *Guide to Producing Statistics on Time Use: Measuring Paid and Unpaid Work* (2005).

In order to ensure the mainstreaming of gender into the data collection process, the Division is also reflecting a gender perspective into the

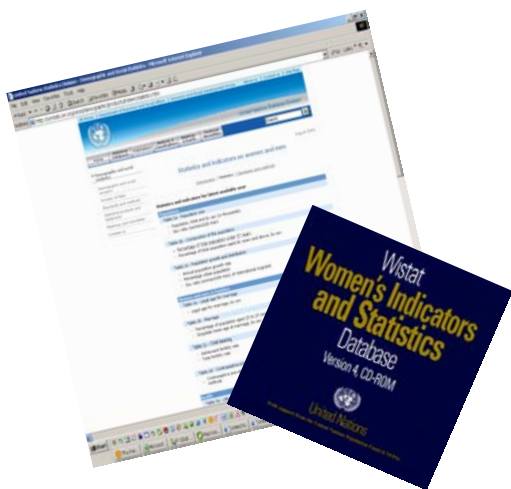
*Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, technical reports, methodological handbooks and guidelines, as they are being revised. For example, in the current review of the *Principles and Recommendations, Rev 2* (forthcoming), gender considerations have substantially been taken into account. Another Handbook that seeks to mainstream gender into the production of statistics is the "Technical Report on Collecting Economic Statistics in Population Censuses", which is being updated and will be published as a methodological handbook.



## Compilation and dissemination of gender statistics

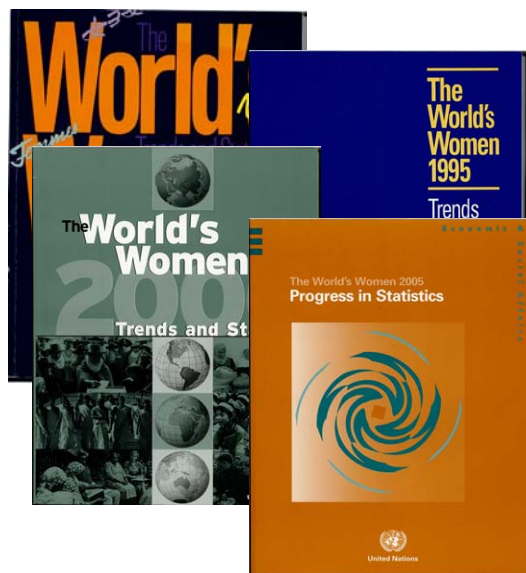
The statistics dissemination component of the programme aims at making data readily available in formats and media that are not only easily accessible to users, but well understood.

Drawing from official data collected from countries by the Statistics Division and other United Nations agencies (funds and programmes), a wide range of outputs which address different audiences have been produced. This work began with a study on basic indicators required to study gender differentials in society and the major sources of the data, leading to the report *Compiling Social Indicators on the Situation of Women* (1984). The first compendium of indicators, the “Selected Statistics and Indicators on the Status of Women” was issued in 1985, with an accompanying Wall Chart, for the Third World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi, the same year. The data compilation evolved into the development of a database on gender statistics, in 1986, and was disseminated through a CD Rom “Women’s Indicators and Statistics (Wistat) database” and manual issued in print. Four versions of the database were issued, the last in 2000, before this form of dissemination of gender statistics was replaced with Internet dissemination: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/in\\_dwm/statistics.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/in_dwm/statistics.htm). The target audience of the gender statistics dissemination programme was extended through web dissemination of gender statistics began in 1996.



In 1991 another avenue of statistics dissemination was introduced, through the publication: *The World’s Women: Trends and Statistics, 1970-1990*. This maiden publication presented a statistical analysis of the situation of women (in comparison to men). Two subsequent issues in 1995 and 2000, provided updates with respects to both the coverage of issues and the statistics, and highlighted gaps in the available data. The fourth issue, released in 2005, focused on the progress made in the production of gender statistics. This publication implicitly highlighted the wide variations in statistical capacity among

countries and areas. Acting on the key findings of the study, the Statistical Commission at its 37<sup>th</sup> Session, recommended ways of improving the availability of gender statistics. As result of the expressed needs following the issuance of the first issue of *The World’s Women*, the Division produced the *Handbook for Producing National Statistical Reports on Women and Men* (1997), to be used at national level to enhance the dissemination of gender statistics, and at regional and global levels for capacity-building in the dissemination of gender statistics.



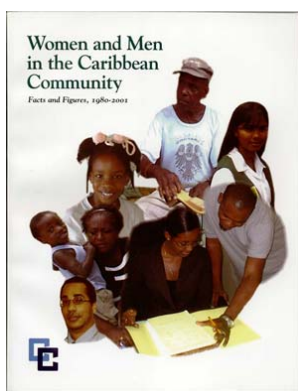
The Division envisages in its current programme of gender statistics to continue to make statistics and indicators on gender issues available in a database that can be accessed both on-line and on CD. It is proposed to adopt the DevInfo Platform, in order to promote the use of and facilitate the presentation of the statistics in tables, graphs, and maps.

### Technical cooperation and capacity-building

The Statistics Division provided a variety of technical assistance in gender statistics to national statistical offices, regional programmes and United Nations agencies. This support, which ranged from organizing training workshops at the interregional, regional and national levels, to providing direct technical assistance to countries, agencies and other institutions, was critical as few institutions had the skill to incorporate gender into their statistical activities. The initial workshops involved providing technical inputs in partnership with the United Nations International Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), to

conduct a series of workshops. The first, sub-regional seminar on “Training Users and Producers in Compiling Statistics and Indicators on Women in Development” was organized in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1985, and materials from the seminar were published to serve as a resource for future workshops. Over a period of five years, several national and sub-regional workshops were organized to promote user-producer dialogue on user needs, the limitations in the concepts and methods, and the challenges in data collection. The focus of the workshops was subsequently directed to enhancing the capacity of national statistical offices to compile and disseminate gender statistics. A number of workshops, mainly sub-regional, were organized in collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations, for example, for the Pacific Islands (with INSTRAW), for Asian countries (with the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific), for South-eastern African countries (with Statistics Sweden), for Northern Africa and Western Asian countries (with the Economic Commission of Western Asia), and for the Caribbean (with the Caribbean Community Secretariat)

Another significant area of technical cooperation was in the implementation of projects: one was a national project and the other, a sub-regional project. The national project was funded by UNFPA to build a Wistat-type database in the Women’s Bureau of Kenya, in early 1990s. The project involved the application of techniques developed through the Wistat programme, the conduct of workshops, and the use of materials developed by the Division to provide hands-on training for staff of the Kenya Women’s Bureau. The second project was funded under the United Nations Development Account, which helped establish a programme on social and gender statistics in the CARICOM Secretariat and provided training to all CARICOM member countries. The other products generated by the project were: the publication *Women and Men in the Caribbean Community: Facts and Figures, 1980-2001* (2003) and a database on social-gender statistics.



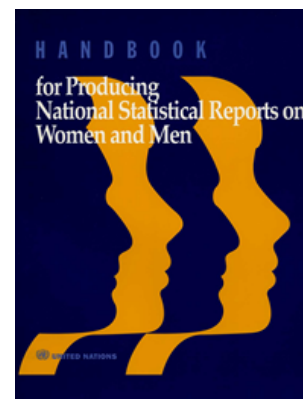
Ongoing technical assistance has also been provided, to institutions including United Nations

Departments, funds and programmes, national statistical offices and development partners, upon request, usually but not exclusively in the form of the Division providing resource persons for regional and national training workshops.

## Partnerships

The gender statistics programme has evolved through producer-user cooperation, at the international and regional levels. Much of its accomplishments in this programme can be attributed to its successful cooperation with and the financial support that was provided by other agencies and development partners. While the Division has provided a lot of technical support to agencies, it has also received programming support from these and bilateral institutions. The Division’s initial work on concepts and methods and the resulting publications were undertaken in partnership with INSTRAW; and the Wistat database was undertaken through funding from UNFPA. The database was the foundation for the *The World’s Women* series, also a result of an interagency effort. Collaborating agencies provided both technical and financial contributions, with additional support from bilateral institutions, and national governments.

The *Handbook for Producing National Statistical Reports on Women and Men* was produced under the project of the Gender in Development Subgroup of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (comprised of several United Nations agencies); and the *Guide to Producing Statistics on Time*



*Use* was prepared with financial contributions from UNDP and International Development Research Centre/Canada. In the early 1990s, leading up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, the technical cooperation activities were supported by the Norwegian government, which funded the post of “Technical Adviser in women in development”, and with supplementary funding from the two cited projects. The most recent activity “Interagency and Expert Group on the Development of gender Statistics”, held in New York, 12-14 December 2006, was organized in collaboration with UNFPA and the World Bank.

## A new programme orientation

The Division is in the process of reorganizing its gender statistics programme, following on the recommendations of the Interagency and Expert Group, December 2006. The meeting considered that a “Global Gender Statistics Programme” was needed to foster knowledge management and the sharing of information and technical resources on gender statistics at the national, regional and global levels. The three main programme components are envisaged:

- *Interagency and expert group to advance gender statistics at the global level (IAEG-GS)*
- *Bulletin Board as a technical and information resource and channel for both formal and informal networking*
- *Development of training courses for adoption and adaptation at all levels*

### (a) IAEG-GS

The Interagency and Expert Group (IAEG-GS) comprising representatives of the gender statistics programmes of international, regional and national institutions, is to be set up. Its main tasks would include: taking stock, reviewing progress, challenges and emerging needs, and proposing actions for the international, regional, sub-regional and national levels. The IAEG-GS will be launched at a World Forum for Gender Statistics in Italy, in October 2007.

### (b) Bulletin board for gender statistics

A Bulletin Board (portal) for Gender Statistics is to be established as the primary tool for knowledge management and for the sharing information, technical resources and data. The Bulletin Board is to serve as a “One-stop-shop” on who is doing/has done what, it can be a single point-of-entry for international, regional and national institutions, as well as individuals, to access tools and materials, information on activities and programmes, including meetings, data collection development work, data, methodologies, definitions, etc. The Bulletin Board would also provide a platform for disseminating statistics and indicators on gender issues world-wide.

### (c) Development of training courses

The primary goal of the courses would be to strengthen the capacities of national statistical offices (NSOs) to produce gender-sensitive statistics, as well as basic statistics, and of mid-management level practitioners, statisticians and users of statistics, policy makers and programme officers, etc. to use gender statistics in policy formulation, planning and monitoring and evaluation. The courses would be conducted in different contexts—in targeted workshops and seminars; in short-term training programmes either as stand-alone or part of regular statistics training, of varying duration, and for broader target audience.