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Group of Experts on Gender Statistics

**REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GENDER STATISTICS ON ITS FIFTH
MEETING
(Geneva, 6-8 October 2008)**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The fifth UNECE Meeting on Gender Statistics was held 6-8 October 2008 in Geneva. It was attended by participants from Algeria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat and Medstat II Programme. The World Bank (WB), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Office for High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS STAT) were also represented. Experts from National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey and from Statistics of Aaland Island participated at the invitation of the UNECE Secretariat.

2. Mr. Gerry Brady (Ireland) was elected as Chairperson of the meeting.

3. The following substantive topics were discussed:

Item 2. Gender Statistics Training for Statisticians.

Item 3. Usage of Statistical Data for Gender Analysis at National and International

Levels.

Item 4. Measurement of Gender Disparities within Other Sub-population Groups.

Item 5. Economic Indicators for Gender Analysis.

Item 6. Indicators on Gender-based Violence.

4. The following participants acted as Discussants, for agenda item 3, Ms. Marcella S. Jones (US Census Bureau), agenda item 4, Ms. Klelija Balta (UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava) and agenda item 5, Mr. Ko Oudhof (Statistics Netherlands).

5. The discussion at the meeting was based on invited and supporting papers. The papers are available on the UNECE website at the following address:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2008.10.gender.htm>

II. SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

Item 2. Gender Statistics Training for Statisticians

Documentation: Invited papers by Kazakhstan and UNECE; draft manual “Developing Gender Statistics: A Practical Tool” prepared by the UNECE Task Force on Gender Statistics; presentations by World Bank/UNECE, Germany, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

6. The World Bank and UNECE provided an update on the activities of the joint project “Engendering National Statistical Systems For a Knowledge-Based Policy Formulation”. Kazakhstan provided an example of how gender statistics are implemented in the work program of a National Statistical Institute, and described the contribution of technical cooperation activities to improve the production and dissemination of gender statistics.

7. The structure and content of the draft manual “Developing Gender Statistics: A Practical Tool” were also briefly presented, and two countries, Germany and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, shared some considerations on developing gender statistics and some comments on the draft manual.

8. The participants discussed institutional arrangements (who works on gender statistics in national statistical offices). Traditionally, gender statistics in several countries were dealt with by a substantive department such as demographic, social or employment statistics. It was observed that it would be preferable to have a dedicated unit or coordinating body working on gender statistics in cooperation with all other relevant substantive departments.

9. The participants discussed whether a bottom-up or a top-down approach is more appropriate for the production of gender statistics. It was observed that, in general, the two approaches should be integrated although one or the other can be preferable depending on the context. Germany noted that in their experience the top-down approach is preferable because it allows budgetary constraints to be better taken into account.

10. Various participants noted the importance of producing broader measures of work than

the traditional data on employment and unemployment including, for instance, unpaid voluntary work. In this regard, it is very important to adopt commonly agreed concepts and definitions to make sure that the results are comparable.

11. More attention should be paid to the gender aspects related to the work in the informal sector and informal work in general. In this context, the definition of informal employment adopted is very important. Furthermore, the various sub-categories of informal employment should be identified and separate information should be collected, so that the statistics produced reflect as much as possible the reality.

12. With regard to the manual, it was recognized that countries differ significantly in their social and economic conditions. Therefore, the content of the manual cannot be implemented uniformly in all countries. It is important that countries consider the suggestions provided in the Manual and adapt them to fit their national circumstances. Nevertheless, it was observed that the manual represents a useful tool for countries to produce statistics that better reflect the reality of women and men. It will be up to the countries to take into account the characteristics of the national context when translating the content of the manual into practice.

Item 3: Usage of Statistical Data for Gender Analysis at National and International Levels.

Documentation: Invited papers by Switzerland, OECD Development Centre and UNECE.

13. The participants reviewed recent developments and new initiatives in the presentation and use of statistics for gender analysis. UNECE presented an update on its Gender Statistics Database. The Database provides a wide range of demographic, social and economic data for countries of the UNECE region. Following a review of the database by the Task Force on Gender Database, many new indicators and tables have been introduced in different areas of policy concern including: education, work and economy, life balance, public life & decision making, crime & violence, science & ICT. The meeting welcomed the improvements made to the Gender Database and congratulated the Task Force for the work carried out.

14. Switzerland provided an example of how the UNECE database can be used as a tool for gender analysis. The presentation focused on some of the newly added indicators on reconciliation between family and work life: working patterns in couple households, part-time employment and time spent in paid and unpaid work. The analysis showed that, albeit important differences between countries, the presence of children remains a key factor underlying the unequal sharing of responsibilities between parents.

15. OECD presented an update of two tools aimed at improving the availability and use of gender statistics and indicators to address issues of gender equality. The OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database is a comprehensive data collection on various dimensions of gender equality, which now includes 12 new variables on social institutions (family code, physical integrity, civil liberties and ownership rights). Wikigender is a new internet platform which provides an open forum to share and exchange information on the situation of women and men around the world. This community tool fosters a bottom-up dialogue on the importance of gender statistics, as it reaches out to the public and enables new actors to get involved in data

collection and dissemination.

16. Participants agreed that these tools provide a wealth of information for gender analysis. However, it was noted that more efforts are needed to increase the visibility of these tools and to help users to understand the data provided and to better grasp their gender relevance. UNECE gave an overview of the general principles of effective visual presentation of statistical data to highlight gender issues. Some examples were presented of how tables, graphs and maps can be improved to communicate more accurately the underlying message. The key word is simplicity: it increases the chance of the information being used and being useful.

17. A plea was made for increased collaboration between international organizations. The combination or integration of the different databases was put forward as a possible way to increase the potential of these tools. The need to improve the way gender data are presented by statistical offices was generally recognized.

Item 4: Measurement of Gender Disparities within Other Sub-population Groups

Documentation: Papers by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom; presentation by the UNDP Bratislava Regional Center; multimedia presentation by UNECE and the World Bank.

18. A multimedia presentation on Gender and population sub-groups, produced by the World Bank Institute and the UNECE, was presented to introduce the topic.

19. The participants discussed various issues related to the measurement of gender-based discrimination and multiple discrimination (with reference to gender and ethnicity), including advantages and disadvantages of different indicators. The odds ratio was proposed as a suitable indicator to capture inequality and discrimination in relative terms (as compared to the reference population). This approach can limit the problem of comparability across countries inherent in other measures of inequality.

20. The different approaches of measuring gender disparities within minority groups were also discussed. The participants underlined the sensitivity of collecting information on ethnicity in many countries, and the importance of defining clearly the functions of different stakeholders (statistical offices, government, etc).

21. The meeting discussed the possibility of conducting surveys/data collection on gender inequality by ethnicity. The diversity of answers emphasized the variety of issues that need to be addressed at the country level. In Kazakhstan, for instance, the Agency on Statistics collects regularly information on about 100 national groups. At the opposite end, there are countries where the NSO is banned by law to collect data on ethnic subgroups. There are other countries where the legislation would allow for data collection by ethnicity, but the NSOs do not collect or publish data on ethnic minorities.

22. Participants also discussed the issue of sensitivity in relation to the measurement of ethnic groups and the usual difficulties in approaching the respondents with questions about ethnicity. It was reported that in some countries the issue is not so much the actual sensitivity but rather a

general notion that data on minorities ‘should not be collected’.

23. Some questions can be used as proxies to collect information relevant to ethnicity in a way that is more acceptable given national circumstances. For instance, in some countries a question on legal citizenship or country of birth is generally more accepted and can give sufficiently good information to identify certain population sub-groups (depending on various factors, including naturalization practices). In other countries, it may be possible to use questions on language or place of origin of parents to capture the requisite information. The choice of concept will depend on national circumstances. However, it should be stressed that all the above concepts, though interrelated, remain distinct and should never be used interchangeably.

Item 5: Economic Indicators for Gender Analysis

Documentation: Papers by Canada, Netherlands, Portugal and UNECE.

24. The meeting considered the need to incorporate a gender perspective in the production of economic statistics and the use of such information for gender analysis. The presentation by Canada noted that a key problem in incorporating a gender perspective in the production of economic statistics is the fact that the unit of analysis in economic statistics is not the individual. Although in some areas of economic statistics it may be important to reconsider the unit of analysis in order to generate statistics relevant for gender analysis, this may not be the case for all areas of economic statistics. Rather it may be important to consider conducting gender analysis of economic data by linking such information with relevant individual-level data that can shed light on gender issues in the economy. Areas within economic statistics where it may be valuable to incorporate a gender perspective include: entrepreneurship, intra-family resource transfers and informal markets.

25. Participants were interested in learning how the available economic statistics that address gender issues have been incorporated into the economic policy in Canada. It was pointed out that policy use of the available data has remained within the social domain; that is in policies for maternity and paternity leave; day-care provision; benefits; etcetera.

26. UNECE reviewed current work towards the development of indicators to capture gender differences in income from employment, namely the Gender Pay Gap. It was pointed out that although significant work has been conducted to improve the quality of the indicator, a lot remains to be done. In particular, at present, differences exist in the methodological approaches and data used to calculate the indicator as well as its intended policy focus. As a result, measures of the GPG tend to vary widely and their interpretation to be unclear. In order to improve the indicator there is a need to carefully consider the policy issues that the indicators aim to address (equal pay for work of equal value; overall position in job market; and take-home pay) and to develop distinct methodologies to calculate appropriate indicators. In addition, there is a need to improve the consistency of concepts and definitions used in the different national sources of income data.

27. Some participants noted that current approaches used in the calculation of the GPG do not appropriately address the issue of equal pay for work of equal value and inquired whether

work has been conducted in this area. It was pointed out that in order to develop such an indicator, there is a need to first develop an appropriate classification of jobs that consider the skills needed to perform the job and working conditions. Some participants expressed interest in learning more about the newly revised international classification of occupations. In addition, participants requested more information about the international definitions of the various components of income from employment.

28. The joint presentation by the UNECE gender focal point and UNECE Statistical Division put forward a list of indicators to monitor and assess gender equality in the economy in countries of Central Asia. The set of indicators proposed aims to address the following six thematic areas: poverty reduction, access to resources, access to employment, including entrepreneurship, reconciliation of work and family, public expenditure and economic decision making.

29. Countries noted that the proposed indicators are very relevant for countries in Central Asia. It was suggested that a feasibility study should be conducted to identify which indicators can be readily produced given the available data and which may require additional work to compile the requisite statistics. It was also noted that there is a need to explore possible mechanisms at the national level to incorporate the indicators into the policy-making process. The Netherlands presented an example of gender budgeting analysis. Gender budgeting analysis can be used to assess the impact that policies have on women and men. This type of analysis can be used to raise awareness that policies are not gender neutral; that is, the policies can have a differential impact on women and men. It was pointed out that there are multiple approaches to gender budgeting. The example presented focused particularly on a tool developed in the Netherlands based on a tradition of monitoring benefits received by households. It showed that women are more dependent than men on benefits, primarily due to their greater presence among single parents and older single adults as well as to gender roles.

30. The presentation noted that in order to conduct gender budgeting analysis it is necessary to have relevant data at the individual level. As such, it underscored the need to incorporate a gender perspective in the production of economic statistics. Further work on gender budgeting analysis should clearly specify the role of national statistical offices and the kind of data required from them.

31. Portugal presented its Social Account Matrix (SAM) methodology as an example of an approach to integrate a gender perspective into economic statistics, in this case into national accounts. SAM is a framework that integrates national accounts and social statistics. The advantages are the following: i) it gives a general overview of economy; ii) it has a fixed format; iii) is efficient; and iv) flexible. The SAM developed by Portugal is labour-oriented allowing the generation of estimates by sex on such issues as: income distribution, components of total income from employment including self-employment, productivity growth, employment growth, composition of labour, gender cost of labour at macro level and changes on the labour structure and industry composition. Data examples of these issues were presented.

32. The ensuing discussion proposed considering a broader framework linking causes, actors and effects in order to more thoroughly capture the processes leading to gender differences in the economy. Following the questions put forward by Canada, participants agreed that there is a need

to consider carefully which aspects of economic statistics would be relevant to address gender issues and the appropriateness and feasibility of collecting data on such issues at the individual level and by sex. Participants also agreed that greater communication with economic statisticians is needed in order to improve the production of such statistics.

Item 6: Indicators on Gender-based Violence

Presentations by: UNECE, Canada, Italy, OHCHR, ECLAC, H.Jansen (invited expert)

33. The discussion focused on the proposed set of indicators on Violence Against Women (VAW) which is currently under review by the Friends of the Chair (FOC) Group of the UN Statistical Commission. The process that led to the identification of the proposed set of indicators was described, with particular attention to the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) that was organized by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), in collaboration with UNECE and UNSD (Geneva, 8-10 October 2007). The 2007 EGM made a proposal of a basic set of common indicators to measure VAW and this represents the basis of the work of the FOC group.

34. The proposed set of indicators refers to the following topics:

- (a) Physical violence,
- (b) Sexual violence,
- (c) Intimate partner violence,
- (d) Harmful practices:
 - (i) Female genital mutilation (FGM),
 - (ii) Early marriage.

35. Presenters and participants identified the following issues that would deserve further discussion and they could be considered by the FOC group in order to strengthen the current proposed set of indicators:

- (a) Physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence: broad support exists for the indicators proposed under these topics. Further work is needed to find an agreement on the following aspects, so that fully relevant and comparable indicators can be derived:
 - (i) Identification of a comprehensive and common list of acts/actions that would respectively define physical violence and sexual violence in operational terms;
 - (ii) Different ways to measure severity of violence exist: (1) it can be assessed through impact on the victim (injuries, police reporting, fear for life, health care, etc.); (2) through assessment scales where violent acts are classified in a moderate-to-severe range; or (3) through evaluating the frequency of violent acts.
 - (iii) Frequency measures are essential. There is a need to more clearly define the categories used to capture frequency of violent events particularly: few, many times.
 - (iv) Intimate partner: the concept of partner and former partner is not precisely defined. It may depend on cultural and legal context; the reference period is also particularly important in this case, both for the numerator and denominator of this indicator (one year, five years, lifetime).

- (v) In the context of intimate partner violence, there is a need to capture separately physical and sexual violence. This is important in order to better understand differences in the expression of intimate partner violence across cultures and to explore their degree of overlap.
- (b) Harmful practices:
 - (i) The indicator on FGM is not considered to be so relevant for countries in this region and some specific measurement issues were raised.
 - (ii) Early marriage: the current age limit (18) is considered as being too old and it could be reduced in order to better capture that part of early marriages that can be more closely associated to forced marriages. A preference was also expressed to try to measure forced marriages directly, even if this needs further methodological work.
- (c) Additional indicators. Interest for including additional indicators was expressed and the following topics were supported:
 - (i) Femicide: this is the most extreme form of VAW and data already exist in a certain number of countries. Data can become available through the improvement of existing administrative sources (police reports, judicial data).
 - (ii) Stalking/criminal harassment: The gravity of these forms of violence needs to be recognized, as they are predictive of more extreme forms of violence.
 - (iii) Economic violence, also referred to as financial or economic abuse or material exploitation.
 - (iv) Child sexual abuse (to be captured using retrospective methods of data collection).
- (d) Regional perspective: the need to incorporate a regional perspective was expressed. The final proposal of the FOC group should also incorporate the specific information needs existing at regional and sub-regional levels, in order to increase its relevance to the highest possible number of countries.
- (e) Data collection methods: the final proposal of the FOC should indicate good practices to collect data on VAW, highlighting the primary role of population-based sample surveys.
- (f) Relationship between statistical and legal framework: the final proposal of the FOC group should provide some guidance on how the national statistical authorities should address and possibly reconcile the statistical framework on VAW with the legal framework existing at country level.

Item 7. Future Work

36. The meeting recommended to organize the next Work Session on Gender Statistics in the Spring of 2010. The following topics were suggested for the discussion:

- (a) 2010 Round Census Results: Formulation of proposals for gender analysis of key census topics, especially of new topics introduced in 2010 round;
- (b) Economic Security: Access to credit, savings, pensions, GPG, informal employment and

- employment in informal sector, poverty, social inclusion;
- (c) Violence against Women: Update on the Task Force on Violence against Women, with specific focus on common module on VAW for sample surveys;
 - (d) Decision-making: empowerment, private sector, central banks, financial institutions, media, households;
 - (e) Care: Childcare, elderly population, disability, living arrangements, inter-generational financial transfers;
 - (f) ICT: Access, content, use patterns, internet shopping;
 - (g) Environment and Climate Change: transport, energy, water, carbon footprint, recycling, garbage;
 - (h) Cross-cutting topic: data presentation and communication to highlight gender issues;
 - (i) Health and Lifestyles.

37. The Steering Group will work with UNECE to identify contributions on the proposed topics to be presented at the Work Session.
