United Nations

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Work Session on Gender Statistics
Belgrade, Serbia
29 November – 1 December 2017
Item 9 of the provisional agenda
Emerging issues and international initiatives in gender statistics

Gender aspects of social and demographic statistics in the CIS region: advantages, disadvantages and prospects for further development

Note by CIS-Stat*

Abstract

Over recent years in all countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and at the level of legislative and executive governing institutions of the Commonwealth a significant increase in the demand for statistical information was generally noted, which characterizes the situation and effectiveness of programmes approved to achieve gender equality.

In the present report the CIS Statistical Committee (CIS STAT) provides a brief overview of gender statistics issues in the countries from the CIS region in terms of its quality and availability, as well as its outcomes in support of the national statistical services of the Commonwealth countries in order to develop statistics taking into account the important guiding documents regarding statistics adopted in recent years at the international level. In the consultation process with national statistical organizations, the CIS STAT determined priority areas for the development of methodological recommendations related to population census, labour statistics, living standards of the population, disability statistics and others.

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NOTE: The designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

1. The overall population of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is estimated at 284 million people, 150 million (53%) of whom are women and 134 million (47%) are men.

Table 1: Number of women and men (at the beginning of 2017)

	Thousand people			Number of women per 1 000 men
	Total	Women	men	
Azerbaijan	9810,0	4918,8	4891,2	1006
Armenia	2986,2	1567,4	1418,8	1105
Belarus	9504,7	5078,2	4426,5	1147
Kazakhstan	17918,2	9249,7	8668,5	1067
Kyrgyzstan	6140,2	3097,7	3042,5	1018
Moldova	3550,8	1843,5	1707,3	1080
Russia	146804,4	78760,1	68044,3	1157
Tajikistan	8742,8	4313,3	4429,5	974
Turkmenistan				1008
Uzbekistan	32120,5	15999,5	16121,0	992
Ukraine	42414,9	22770,3	19644,6	1159

2. The population predominance of women over men is typical for most of the Commonwealth countries (except for Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). This is particularly evident in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, where for every 1000 men there are 1147-1159 women.

3. Over the past 15 years life expectancy has increased and exceeded 1990s level in all CIS member States. Its growth rate ranged from 3 to 6 years in different countries. At the same time despite positive trends there is still a very wide gap in life expectancy between men and women: it ranges from 4 years (Azerbaijan) to 11 years (Russia) by the Commonwealth countries. Such a major difference is primarily explained by significantly higher mortality of young men, especially from external causes (accidents, murders, suicides, etc.).

4. The realization of equal rights to education for women and men in the Commonwealth countries ensures gender equality and the high level of education of the population.

Table 2: The Gender parity index within the educational system of countries, 2016

	Ratio of pupils and students by gender			
	pre-school institutions	day-time general education institutions	secondary vocational education institutions	higher education institutions
Azerbaijan	0,86	0,88[1]	1,97	0,94
Armenia	0,97	0,90	1,15	1,20
Belarus	0,91	0,97	1,00	1,24
Kazakhstan	0,97	0,98	0,89	1,23
Kyrgyzstan	0,96	0,97	1,27	1,17
Moldova	0,94	0,97	1,10	1,34
Russia	0,93	0,98[1][2]	1,00	1,16
Tajikistan	0,82	0,91	1,42	0,54
Uzbekistan[2]	0,93	0,94	0,95	0,62
Ukraine	0,92	0,97[1]	1,29	1,04

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[1] Without pupils attending special (remedial) schools
[2] 2015 year.

5. In most countries women have a higher level of education than men. However, against this background women's potential as employers, entrepreneurs and politicians has not yet been fully implemented. The percentage of women in national parliaments of the Commonwealth countries ranges from 11% in Armenia to 27% in Belarus.

6. In Commonwealth countries, women's wages are on average 20 to 30 per cent lower than those of men. Women's lower wage level increases the risk of financial dependence not only during working life, but also at retirement age owing to lower pension savings and, therefore, creates higher poverty risk in old age. At the same time poverty does not have significant gender differences. Poverty among women results from their social roles in society, including child-rearing responsibilities, rather than as a consequence of low levels of education or obstacles to their career advancement.

7. Over recent years the CIS member States are paying increased attention to the development of gender statistics. This has been determined by the society's information needs and the need to obtain data within the framework of the implementing of a number of international decisions.

8. Taking into account the growing demand the CIS STAT is also working to expand the collection of socio-demographic statistics data of CIS countries in the context of "female" and "male" and to present it to a wide range of users:

    a) all the questionnaires that collect information of current statistics from countries are maximally supplemented by gender-responsive indicators. This has enabled to expand the published data;

    b) A Brief guide on gender equality indicators "Gender statistics and the policy in the interests of equality between women and men in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States" was prepared;

    c) A specialized brochure "Women and Men in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States" (in Russian and in English) with the financial support of the UNFPA Regional Office was published in 2015. Also statistical compilations "Young people in the Commonwealth of Independent States" with the financial support of UNFPA were published

in 2014 and 2016. This compilations provide the most detailed information about the situation of young men and women in the CIS countries;

d) A special section "Gender equality" on the CIS STAT's website http://www.cisstat.org/gender_eq/ is opened.
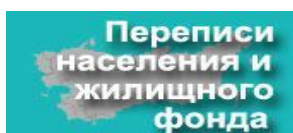

9. For 26 years now (since the founding) the CIS STAT is setting up the information base in accordance with the list of indicators which are agreed with the countries of the Commonwealth. Over time this list has undergone certain changes which are related primarily to the global challenges of the world community development: the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), Millennium Development Goals (2000), Sustainable Development Goals (2015) and other international guidelines. Generally the overall trend of setting up the CIS STAT' base is oriented towards broader representation of information from a gender perspective and the disaggregation of data by necessary age groups.

10. Taking into account their mandate it is important for the CIS STAT to provide information support of economic, social and demographic processes that are taking place across the region, due to their cross-country comparability. In that regard, the principle of maximum "representativeness" of statistical data by countries is a priority.

11. On the issues of data in gender perspective, if we take The Minimum Set of gender indicators approved on the 44th session of the UN Statistical Commission as a certain guideline, then from 52 indicators included in Set, the CIS STAT's information base contains data on 36 variables.

Sections	Number of indicators	The presence in CIS STAT
I. Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources	19	13
II. Education	12	12
III. Health and related services	11	8
IV. Public life and decision-making	5	2
V. Human rights of women and girl children	5	1

12. Currently, the CIS STAT has identified major priority areas, the work on which will enable, among other things, to improve and expand the information collected in a gender perspective: population censuses, labour statistics, living standards, disability statistics.

13. Preparations for the **2020 round of population censuses**. In 2016 The Council of Heads of CIS States decided to carry out the forthcoming population censuses in the closest terms by the year 2020 (from October 2019 to October 2020). The decision to harmonize methodology for obtaining key socio-demographic indicators has also been made. Presently the CIS STAT in cooperation with the national statistical services has developed:

a) the list of indicators to be included in the national population censuses programmes;

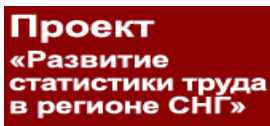b) formulation of questions in census form and methodological recommendations to them;

    c) table shells for inter-State information exchange to share the outcomes of the 2020 round of population censuses and brief explanatory notes for the including indicators.

14. Receiving reliable and comparable information about different categories of migrants (short-term and long-term) and labour force is relevant for CIS region.

15. To measure <u>migration</u> through the national population censuses the following characteristics should be received:

    a) permanent residence (or place of usual residence);

    b) the place where resides at time of census;

    c) country of birth (place of birth);

    d) country of citizenship (citizenship);

    e) duration of residence in the locality (year and month of arrival in the current place);

    f) previous place of residence.

16. To measure <u>labour force</u> through the national population censuses the following characteristics should be received:

    a) labour force status of persons;

    b) status in employment;

    c) persons, engaged in the production of goods for own use;

    d) main source of livelihood.

17. The agreed set of indicators, consistency in their forming methodology and close terms of population censuses will provide a way to evaluate the actual sizes of total labour market in the CIS and the migratory processes taking place in the area of Commonwealth, will expand analyticity of the population censuses outcomes, will ensure international comparability and strengthen informational relations of the CIS countries.

18. More detailed information is available on the CIS STAT website http://www.cisstat.com/census/ in section "Population and housing stock censuses".
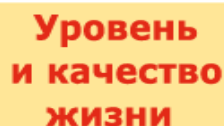

19. Generally, the importance of census is that it allows obtaining information in any required views of data, with any level of disaggregation. Primarily this refers to socio-demographic and economic characteristics of women and men in different age groups: marital status, level of education, labor force participation, employment status, ethno-linguistic distribution of the population, housing conditions and many other indicators.

20. Implementation of the **definitions and standards, taken at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)**, into statistical practice currently is the most important task. The national statistical services of the CIS countries started to actively implement the updated standards for labour statistics.

21. To help countries in this task the CIS STAT within the framework of World Bank's Grant is implementing a Project "Development of labour statistics in the CIS region". Its objectives are providing support for CIS countries in developing of labour statistics national systems in accordance

with international standards, definitions and classifications and improvement of international exchange of information.

22. Implementation of the project provided the opportunity to develop the complex of methodological materials for using in national statistical services taking into account recommendations of the 19th ICLS, aims to measure labour activity, employment and labour underutilization; labour costs; working time; employment in the informal economy; as well as to study labour migration through population censuses and sample surveys. All recommendations contained obligation to receive information in gender perspective.

23. The work within the Project helped to improve inter-State informational exchange in terms of refinement of CIS STAT questionnaires on labour statistics for national statistical services and facilitated the publication of outcomes by the Commonwealth countries. In particular special focus is paid to receiving statistical data on SDGs and decent work.

24. To learn more about methodological materials produced and other Project documents you can go to the CIS STAT website http://www.cisstat.com/CIS_Labourstat/ to section "Project "Development of labour statistics in the CIS region".

25. **Living standards of the population**. In recent years the CIS STAT together with national statistical services and in partnership with UN/ECE worked step by step to improve statistical measurements of living standards and quality of life.

26. To promote international experience the CIS STAT has prepared reviews about establishing a social indicators system of population's living conditions, methods of multidimensional poverty assessment, practices in time-use surveys.

27. All materials prepared by the CIS STAT are presented on the website http://www.cisstat.org/life_quality/ in the section "Living standards and the quality of life".

28. Major problems for poverty measurement in the Commonwealth region are:

    a) data inconsistency with regard to different poverty criteria in the Commonwealth countries;

    b) failure to establish

    c) inability to determine a realistic consumption level of individual household members taking into account gender and age according to the data from household surveys, therefore the poverty is calculated for the household as a whole.

29. There are two approaches in poverty assessment from a gender aspect found in the publications of the countries: the poverty rate for men and for women; the poverty rate for households, where the head of the household is male or female.

Table 3: Women and men with incomes (expenditures) below the poverty line, established at the national level (as % of population of the corresponding group)

	Women			Men		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	32,2	30,0	29,5	31,7	29,9	30,1
Belarus	5,3	4,6	4,8	5,7	5,1	5,6
Kyrgyzstan	36,5	29,7	32,7	37,5	31,5	31,5
Moldova	12,3	11,1	…	13,2	11,9	…
Russia[1]	11,9	12,7	15,0	10,5	10,8	12,8
Ukraine	8,0	8,8	6,2	8,6	8,4	6,7

[1] Women aged 31-54 years, men - 31-59 years.

30. The approach for identifying the head of the household has varied among the countries. It can be a person running a household or a person contributed the most to family budget.

Table 4: Poverty rate by sex of the household head (as % of the total number of households of the corresponding group)

	Female-headed households			Male-headed households		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	36,4	31,5	32,1	30,5	29,4	28,9
Kyrgyzstan	17,4	14,7	15,2	31,0	25,5	27,1
Moldova	10,9	10,2	…	13,6	12,1	…

31. **Unpaid household service work** accounting is important in identifying of social roles of women and men. The main source of information is time-use surveys which are carried out with varying periodicity in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Russia.

32. The major problem of data comparability lies in the differences related to used classifiers. At the 65th plenary session of the Conference of European statisticians (June 2017) the Guide on Valuing Unpaid Household Service Work was endorsed. The implementation of the Guide at the national level will contribute to removing the differences and enable cross-country comparability.

33. **Disability statistics.** With the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that has been joined by majority of the Commonwealth countries, and with increased focus of society and governments to the situation of persons with disabilities the requirements for this area of statistics are changing.

34. A number of Commonwealth countries have already submitted reports on Convention's implementation to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They are based on existing statistics, main sources of which are regular statistical reporting, sample surveys and population censuses. In the concluding observations regarding reports, the Committee, welcoming the activities of the countries in collecting disability data, has expressed concern that information is generally collected based on medical approach to disability, there is a lack of disaggregated data about situation of persons with disabilities needed to make appropriate decisions and to monitor the implementation of the Convention, the organizations of persons with disabilities have not been closely involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention and in the discussion on the programmes for improving their lives and quality of available statistics.

35. The Committee recommended that countries which submitted reports conduct collection, analyses and dissemination of data disaggregated by **sex**, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, occupation, types

of impairments, barriers, which persons with disabilities have faced in society as well as in a regional breakdown.

36. **The gender aspect in relation to persons with disabilities is of particular importance**, in our view, because gender-disaggregated data will enable to purposefully identify this important for productive life in society aspects such as ability to obtain education, profession and participate in the labour market as one of the key factors for independent and equal life of person with disability in society.

37. Like other countries around the world, much remains to be done by the CIS countries for development of disability statistics taking as bases the analysis of already existing data, learning the experiences of different countries in carrying out studies of the person's situation.

38. In 2018 the CIS STAT is planning to analyze established practices and, if available, disability statistics perspective development plans in the countries of Commonwealth and in a number of other countries of the world. The analysis will be carried out under the principle of "desk review" on the basis of available information. A review with proposals to the national statistical services of the CIS countries regarding the priority further steps of disability statistics development will be prepared on its outcomes.

39. **Promising av**enues for further development of gender statistics, which have not disseminated widely in the CIS countries yet, are the following:

    a) issues of economic inequality from gender perspective (holding of financial assets, real estates, lands, etc.);

    b) assessments of various aspects of poverty taking into account its multidimensional nature;

    c) gender aspects of impact on the environment (varying levels of participation of women and men in different types of economic activities, which are harmful in varying degrees to the environment (extractive industry, agricultural sector); using "dirty" fuels for cooking, etc.)

    d) the development of informational and communicational technologies provides the opportunity to look from a gender perspective at new areas of economic activities, in which it was impossible to conduct such disaggregation before. Statistics of e-commerce, among others, can be attributed to such area. This area of statistics is growing rapidly in the CIS region and enables the identification of gender differences in purchasing individual types of goods[1].

40. CIS STAT in its activities plans to pay greater attention to new directions of gender statistics, use these indicators for informational exchange between the countries and represent them to a wide range of users.

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[1] For example, a survey held in October-November 2016 in Russian Federation showed that 21% of men and 25% of women made purchases over the Internet. At the same time among different product positions this ratio can vary 2-4 times.