Introducing SDG indicator 5.5.1b on women’s representation in local government: rationale and methodology

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Women’s political participation is a human right

Dimensions of political participation

- Speak out, assemble and associate
- Register to vote and vote
- Register as candidate in election and campaign
- Hold office at all levels of government
- Public and governmental decision-making

Normative framework for women’s political participation:
KEY MILESTONES

- 1948: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 1952: Convention on the Political Rights of Women
- 1966: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- 1979: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- 1995: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
The case for an indicator on local government
Where SDG indicator 5.5.1b fits into the SDG monitoring framework

- **SDG 5**: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”
- **Target 5.5**: “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.”
- **Indicator 5.5.1**: “proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local government”
Steps undertaken by UN Women to develop the methodology of indicator 5.5.1b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Data compilation</th>
<th>Implementation of the methodology</th>
<th>Capacity building</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Review of National Legal Frameworks in 80 countries + info for 40 countries (CLGF/UCLG)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Technical materials for NSOs and EMBs</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>Mapping national data collection and regional compilation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-Training workshops</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>IAEG-SDG assessment (Nov. 2017) Tier III -&gt; Tier II</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
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<td>2018+</td>
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**Working with global, regional and national partners**
- Technical and expert group meetings (2014, 2016)
- Joint regional workshops with UN Regional Commissions (2016-2017)
The methodology of SDG indicator 5.5.1b, “proportion of elected seats held by women in deliberative bodies of local government”

1. Terms and definitions
2. Scope of indicator
3. Data sources
1. Terms and definitions

What is local government

- Local government is a result of decentralization.
- **Statistical definition of local government**: 2008 SNA (System of National Accounts):
  - distinction between central, state and local government (para 4.129).
  - local government consists of local government units, defined by SNA as institutional units with fiscal, legislative and executive authority over smallest geographical areas distinguished for administrative and political purposes (para 4.145).
- In a given country: identification of local government and its organization is based on the national legal framework.
The composition of local government units

Local government unit

Local government members

Executive body

Deliberative body (council or assembly)

Public administration staff (government employees)

State institutions

may report to or be part of state institutions

may hire

Oversight or participatory roles

Participatory bodies such as neighborhood associations, village consultative council, participatory budgeting committee, service user groups

May elect members of deliberative and executive bodies

Local citizens

Source: Adapted from concepts discussed at the Technical Meeting on Women’s Political Participation at the Local Level, UN Women, New York, 24-25 November 2014.
Local government organization by tiers

- Local government may be organized in 1 or more tiers/levels; each tier contains multiple local government units.
- For example, local government in France is organized in three tiers:

```
+ National level
  |   Region 1   | Region 2   | ...   | Region X   |
  |   Department 1 | Department 2 | ...   | Department X |
  |   Commune 1   | Commune 2   | Commune 3 | ...   | Commune X |
```

13 Regions
96 Departments
36,529 Communes

Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.
Some examples of local government organization by tiers

Some examples:

**El Salvador**
- Central government
- Local government
  - Municipalities

**Burkina Faso**
- Central government
- Local government
  - Regional councils
  - Municipal councils

**Jordan**
- Central government
- Local government
  - Governorate councils
  - Municipal Councils
  - Amman Council
  - Local councils

**India**
- Central Government
- Intermediate sphere of government
  - 24 States and 2 Union territories
  - 3 States and 2 Union territories
  - 2 States
  - 1 State and 1 Union territory
  - 1 Union territory

**United States of America**
- Central Government
- States
  - Local government
    - County
    - City-county
    - Municipalities
    - Amman Council
- Local government
  - County
  - Municipalities
  - Town or townships
  - Municipalities
  - Town or townships
  - Municipalities
2. Scope of indicator 5.5.1b

The indicator covers:

• All tiers of local government as specified by national legal frameworks.

• Positions in deliberative bodies
  • Mirrors existing indicators for national government;
  • The great majority of local government members.

• Elected positions only
  • Most positions in local government
  • Persons elected on openly contested seats, reserved seats or through a candidate quota.
  • Captures political participation and accountability to citizens
  • Low cost data sources
Calculation of the indicator

• The indicator:

\[ \frac{\text{Number of positions held by women}}{\text{Total number of positions held by women and men}} \times 100 \]

• Calculated as:

\[ \frac{\text{Sum of elected positions held by women in deliberative bodies of local government}}{\text{Sum of elected positions held by women and men in deliberative bodies of local government}} \times 100 \]

An example of a country with two tiers:

• Upper tier: 10 women in elected positions out of 100 total women and men in elected positions

• Lower tier: 500 women in elected positions out of 2000 total women and men in elected positions

Indicator calculated as:

\[ \frac{10 + 500}{100 + 2000} \times 100 = 24\% \]
3. Sources and flow of data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b

Preferred data source

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of data</th>
<th>Local government composition data</th>
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**Elected positions**

**Appointed positions**

**Local election results**

**Administrative data on election results**

**National Statistical Offices (NSOs)**

**Ministries overseeing Local Government**

**Women’s Affairs Ministries**

**Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs)**

**Dissemination of centralized election results**

**UN Women & UN Regional Commissions**
EMBs as recommended data source

- Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) as preferred data source
  - EMBs are part of the National Statistical Systems
  - Low-cost existing data: collection and dissemination of electoral information are essential tasks for EMBs

- Well-placed to ensure the integration of variable “sex” in the information collected on political participation, including on:
  - Voter registration
  - Voter turnout
  - Candidacies in local elections
  - Seats won

- Challenges:
  - Collection of data disaggregated by sex and/or dissemination not yet institutionalized in all countries.
  - Centralization of data difficult in some countries (federal systems in particular).
  - Information is not stored and/or transmitted electronically.
  - Need to improve technical capacity to produce and disseminate simple statistical summaries on women and men voters, candidates and winners of elections
  - Data produced by EMBs may not be integrated by NSOs with other statistics
Institutionalizing data collection and dissemination in EMBs

• Clear statistical mandate of EMB (integrated in electoral laws, rules or regulations).

• Assessment on existing potential dimensions of disaggregation in electoral registration forms and electronic information system, covering:
  • GIS integration in the information system of the EMBs (consistency with geo-spatial standards used by NSSs).
  • Voter registration and candidate registration paper forms and electronic formats should include, at minimum, information on sex and age.
  • Ensuring disaggregated data on voter turnout and winners of elections (through linkages of information on registered voters and actual voters and between candidates and elected candidates, or separate data storage).

• Implementation of suggested changes in the system of collecting and storing information on registered voters, voters, candidates and elected candidates.

• Ensuring post-election dissemination of results in a statistical format that is easily accessible, to prevent that data generated by EMBs remain an underused public good.

• Developing data sharing agreements to ensure that EMB data can easily be accessed by NSOs and other entities of the NSSs.
Other sources of data

- When sex-disaggregated data on election results not available, two other data sources to be considered:
  - **Public administration data** available to line ministries overseeing local government
    - Additional processing of information may be necessary (information on women and men in elected positions mixed with information on appointments or public administration employees)
    - Elected positions may not be covered in the records maintained (if administrative records restricted to paid positions)
  - **Surveys or censuses using local government units as units of observation**
    - May be undertaken by National Statistical Offices and/or line ministries
    - Three types: (a) local government censuses or surveys; (b) establishment surveys; and (c) municipality surveys.
    - Would need to distinguish between elected positions of local government vs. appointed positions vs. public administration employees.
Thank you.