

Overview of Phase III of The Africa Programme on Gender Statistics (2022-2026)

By the end of Phase III African Member States will have strengthened their national capacities to collect, compile, and disseminate gender statistics to improve gender indicators for sustainable development. This will be achieved through regional partnership and coordination, capacity-building and research, reporting, storage, and dissemination, and gender statistics advocacy, uptake, and use.

Introduction

Gender equality is central in the achievement of socioeconomic and cultural development. First recognized by the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi (1985), the importance of producing gender statistics to better address gender issues was reiterated by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2016). Other UN declarations, resolutions and development frameworks have also referred to gender equality and called upon countries to produce the gender statistics required for the appraisal of progress made towards achieving the aims of these frameworks.

Currently in its third phase, the Africa Programme on Gender Statistics (APGS) is an umbrella regional programme that brings together various initiatives aimed at improving the availability of accurate, timely, up-to-date, and comparable gender statistics at the national, regional, and international levels. Led by the African Group on Gender Statistics (AGGES)¹, the APGS is implemented by regional organizations, international agencies, regional economic communities, and civil society organizations under the coordination of core implementing partners AUC, UNECA, UN Women, and AfDB. UNECA acts as the secretariat of the APGS and assists with the coordination of implementing partners.

The current phase builds on gains and lessons from APGS 2018–2021 with the end goal of ensuring that by 2026, African Member States would

¹ In recognition of the importance of gender statistics for the improvement of gender equality and women's empowerment, African countries and continental gender statistics stakeholders have given increasing attention to the promotion, production, and use of gender statistics. The Statistical Commission for Africa (Stat-Com-Africa) therefore established the African Group on Gender Statistics (AGGES) at its first meeting in 2008 with UNECA as its secretariat. AGGES is mandated to provide support and advice on gender statistics issues, needs, challenges, poverty reduction strategies, and the global development agenda in the region.

APGS VISION



Assumption: The collection and use of gender statistics should ultimately be to provide evidence to advance gender equality and human development.

have strengthened their national capacities to collect, compile, and disseminate gender statistics to improve gender indicators for sustainable development.

The Challenge of Gender Data and Statistics

Lack of adequate data to inform and monitor policies and progress in Africa often undermines the implementation of development policies and programmes to move forward the gender agenda. The production of gender statistics in the region has been slow due to a combination of factors including a reluctance to change how statistics have traditionally been compiled and presented, lack of knowledge on how change can be effected, and lack of commitment to gender equality. A 2017 UN Women assessment identified additional challenges



including a limiting policy and financial environment, gaps in mapping and establishing a minimum set of national gender indicators, lack of disaggregated data, inaccessibility of data for users, and limited interactions between users and producers. As such, national statistics offices (NSOs) in Africa have not made the requisite progress in designing systems and operations to generate the gender-related data needed to support continued advocacy on the social and economic implications of gender imbalances. Even at the global level, lack of gender-sensitive data is a challenge largely precipitated by inadequate statistical capacity and lack of gender mainstreaming in national statistical systems (NSSs), among other constraints.

Phase III of the Africa Programme on Gender Statistics

Efforts in this phase will focus on regional partnerships and coordination, capacity-building and research, reporting and dissemination, and advocacy.

APGS will leverage the increased current interest in gender statistics, the favorable environment at the global, regional, and sub-regional levels for strengthening the capacity to collect gender statistics, and the prevailing conducive policy environment for the integration of gender statistics into statistical databases. The APGS will continue to prioritize support to key international and regional agendas such as Agenda 2030 and Africa's Agenda 2063 and the reporting requirements of international treaties such as CEDAW² and the BPfA while putting special focus on addressing the persistent challenges of weak coordination mechanisms and lack of resources at the national level for sustainable production and use of gender statistics.

Whereas the APGS will continue to function as a common regional programme for Pan-African institutions and development partners to support member states to develop and integrate gender statistics programming into their National Statistical Systems (NSSs), the role of the AGGES for the Programme will be redefined and reconstituted. In this phase, AGGES will provide strategic guidance to APGS implementing partners and monitor their implementation of the Programme as part of more active engagement and proactive agenda-setting given AGGES' strategic relationship with Member States.

While earlier phases of APGS have achieved much including laying the foundation and creating a conducive environment to improve the availability of accurate gender statistics at all levels and developing methodologies and approaches for producing gender statistics, much remains to be done. Building on the partnerships established to strengthen knowledge, skills, and communication on the production,

dissemination, and sharing of gender statistics in Africa, in Phase III, APGS will actively expand its membership to include more agencies active in the field of gender statistics. The Programme will also strengthen coordination and reinforce partnership through various mechanisms including an agreed workplan of activities and budget by stakeholders with effective support to Member States.

The APGS has made strides in advocating to and sensitizing member states' NSOs on the need to produce world-class gender statistics for evidence-based planning and policymaking, and NSOs have started implementing the new methodologies learned. However, these efforts need to be strengthened. In Phase III, APGS will train NSOs to identify and address institutional, legal, and financial constraints to mainstreaming gender into NSSs and expand the integration of gender statistics as part of government planning processes and monitoring frameworks to include more countries in the region. APGS will also replicate the development of gender-sensitive indicators in national frameworks with special reference to SDGs reporting and national monitoring in other countries.

The production of gender statistics is relatively new, and information is not fully consolidated. APGS will therefore strengthen the community of practice (CoP) through continued sharing of best practices and creating new knowledge to advance the field of gender statistics. APGS will expand the CoP to include researchers and academia undertaking research on gender statistics to facilitate a continuous flow of new ideas and enrichment of the field including through the establishment of an Africa resource inventory to lead practitioners to existing gender statistics knowledge management platforms—essentially a one-stop site accessed via APGS. The Programme will also continue to develop and provide guidelines for the reporting and dissemination of gender statistics that emphasize accessibility, clarity, and unfettered usability to ensure the effective integration of gender statistics into NSSs as part of national data collection processes.

By the end of the previous phase in 2021, members acknowledged the APGS as a valuable platform for knowledge and experience-sharing, particularly during the pandemic where there was an increase in the use of technology to collaborate virtually. APGS III will further build on this by develop a communications strategy to promote buy-in by regional partners, gender statistics producers and users at country level, and support increased resource mobilization.

To further build credence and leverage resources while ensuring better reporting and consolidation of results, in Phase III of the Programme, core implementing partners will apply a more cohesive and consultative approach for better-coordinated support to Member States for greater impact. An integrated results framework will also lead to better collection of information and organization of results.

² An international treaty also described as an international bill of rights for women, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and instituted on 3 September 1981. It has been ratified by 189 states.