

IWD2024 Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress

VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE | 6 MARCH 2024

KEY TAKEAWAYS

GENDER DATA IS DRIVING CHANGE BUT MORE REMAINS TO BE DONE

for Countries and Partners to Invest in the Use of this Data, Increase Political Will, and Foster Stronger and Wider Collaboration to Make Women and Girls Count.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024

One of the key challenges in achieving gender equality by 2030 is an alarming lack of financing with a staggering USD 360 billion annual deficit in spending on gender-equality measures.

The 2024 International Women's Day (IWD) theme, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress", recognizes the crucial role of financing in closing the gender gap both for sustainable development and in keeping with Africa's development priorities as articulated in Agenda 2063. The IWD 2023 theme aligns with the 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) theme on "Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective".

ABOUT THE EVENT

In this pre-IWD2024 roundtable event, Making Every Woman and Girl Count (Women Count), UN Women's global gender data and statistics programme, convened sector actors to call for investing in women to accelerate progress through expertly-moderated discussions on three topics:

1. Investing in gender data as a vehicle for driving change
2. Prioritizing gender-responsive budgeting
3. Shifting to a care society and implementing gender-responsive financing

The virtual roundtable event aimed to explore opportunities for diverse sector players to invest in women in their respective spheres of influence to accelerate progress towards both Africa's Agenda 2063 and the Global Agenda 2030. The virtual roundtable was further aimed at: highlighting the importance of the above three aspects of investing in women; and showcasing various actors' successes in investing in their capacities in the respective areas.



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GENDER DATA AS A DRIVER FOR CHANGE

- **Gender data helps make women visible.** Making this data visible helps policymakers design specific interventions and enables policymakers and businesses make evidence-based decisions.
- **Gender data improves autonomy** and access to rights for women, girls and all
- **Media practitioners and state actors** showed how they are using this data in their respective sectors to drive change and make policy decisions that promote gender equality.
- **Media plays a critical role in amplifying and elaborating gaps** to drive policy change. Senior media practitioners presented case studies on how journalists are using [health-related gender data](#) as well gender-based violence (GBV) and [femicide in Kenya data](#) to shine a light on neglected areas of society and expose gaps that urgently need policy, [legal, and other remedies](#).
- **Rwanda** is [investing in women](#) by using gender data to inform interventions in both the public and private sectors. A senior representative from the country's Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) articulated how gender data in the private sector has helped companies here to promote gender equality at the workplace and establish more women-friendly work spaces thus increasing women productivity and increasing the number of women in leadership. For the public sector, it has informed the formulation of gender-responsive electoral processes that have helped to more than quadruple the percentage of women district chairpersons (from 6% to 27%).

GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR WOMEN'S AND SOCIETY'S PROGRESS?

- **Gender-responsive budgeting** is a [growing area of interest and expertise in Africa](#) and Arab States with increasing collaboration and partnership between UN Women, countries and continental and regional actors to both improve the results of budgets in general and to advance gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).
- **Morocco and Cameroon** continue to blaze a trail in gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and are incorporating gender data at all levels throughout the budget-making progress.
- ***Morocco has had in place constitutional reforms to streamline gender*** since 2000 and has since received support from the World Bank and UN Women to this end. The Ministry of Economy and Finance established the [Morocco GRB Center of Excellence](#) (GRB-CE) in 2023 to promote knowledge across ministries on mainstreaming gender in budgeting and implementation. The Center also provides technical support to other ministries to incorporate [gender statistics from Morocco](#) in programs. Ongoing efforts have resulted in [GRB being progressively anchored in Morocco's budget reform process](#) and resulted in the adoption of the new organic law of finance by the Council of Government, which legally institutionalizes gender equality throughout budget processes. As of 2024, at least one in three (30%) key performance indicators across ministries are being implemented in line with gender equality. The Center of Excellence serves as a model across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.



Gender data is crucial for understanding the realities of women and girls, measuring progress on gender equality, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Krista Jones Baptista,
Executive Director, Data 2X,
a global gender data alliance
that builds the case and mobilizes
action for gender data.

- **Cameroon has adopted gender-responsive budgeting since the 2007 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).** The country's GRB center of excellence serves to analyze the programs of all ministries and institutions to ensure that they implement gender-sensitive programs with regular [technical support and capacity enhancement of sector actors](#) towards this goal. The Centre implements presidential orders in line with this and also serves to provide guidance on revising these proposals every three years across all operational levels of government. [Gender data from Cameroon](#) is mainstreamed throughout the process from budget-making to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- **Uganda** has passed a law requiring ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) to prove how their programmes and interventions will or have already addressed gender gaps before they can access the budget with regular [engagement of parliamentarians in gender-responsive budgeting](#) and related efforts. [All MDAs are required by law to demonstrate compliance with gender principles](#) before accessing national funds for further implementation. The compliance level is strict with an assessment criteria that incorporates the [use of gender statistics](#) in MDA implementation activities.

GENDER DATA AND THE TRANSITION TO A CARE ECONOMY & CARE SOCIETY

- **The care economy and care society exemplifies investment in women** and is a pivotal component for accelerated progress. [UN Women and related evidence](#) shows that the disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women in Africa and Arab States, like in the rest of the world, has negative implications for both economic growth and societal development as it diminishes [women's participation in the economy](#). Not recognizing care and domestic work limits the [contribution to countries' GDP](#).
- **Senegal's use of time use data** has set the foundation for the implementation of the **care economy** and the **purple economy**. The constitution, along with several strategies including a national strategy, now considers unpaid care work and dedicates essential aspects to reducing care work, a factor that is integrated in the country's third national strategy. Beyond raising awareness on care needs and the burden of domestic work on women, [Senegal's time use data](#) has informed a recent decree that all ministerial services here should have care facilities for children under the age of 3 years. Efforts are in progress towards this with these and other [gender data initiatives in Senegal](#) steadily contributing to a national system that is sensitive to unpaid care work particularly for poor and vulnerable households where the burden is often greater.



CONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVES - THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

- **Gender data gaps** present a significant challenge in Africa, just as they do worldwide. This means that women may be overlooked in policy and decision-making and development initiatives.

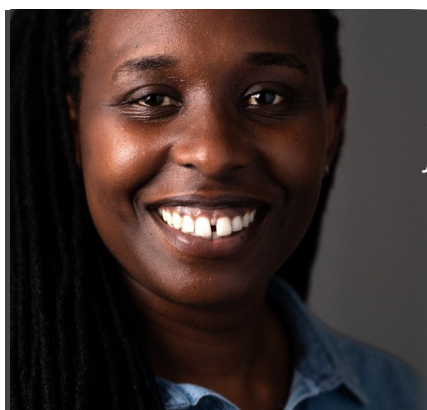
Gender data financing is elusive.

Although the official development assistance for gender equality has increased every year since 2015, funding for gender data and statistics has fallen by 55% compared to the average between 2017-19, which is 3 times higher than the drop in funding statistics as a whole.

- **National statistical offices** (NSOs) have limited technical and financial capacity to use and often even produce adequate data. As a result, some of the data being used is outdated, consisting of paper based records that does not reflect the true realities of the ground. Even when the data is available, it is not accessible and therefore cannot inform decision-making.
- **Many governments still lack laws and regulations** that govern the production and dissemination of gender data and statistics. Therefore, countries need strong political will and support to review and adopt legal and political frameworks as well as to prioritise building their capacities to integrate

gender data into and across their national policies and plans especially national statistical development strategies to inform decision making

- **The “Three C’s” of the [COVID-19 pandemic, Climate Change and Conflicts](#)** have shifted spending/ budgeting and government priorities, in many cases to the detriment of investment in gender data.
- **The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)’s investment in gender statistics** includes technical and other [support to national statistics offices](#) (NSOs) to modernize systems and grow their capacity to gather gender data and mainstream it in national statistical systems (NSSs). This enables countries to [use more of the gender data](#) that they have produced to monitor national commitments as well as commitments to Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 (the SDGs). ECA emphasized the importance of “leaving no statistical systems behind”.
- **The African Development Bank (AfDB)’s [gender mainstreaming approaches](#) include policy-based lending or budget support as key lending instruments.** Since the COVID-19 pandemic, countries have been borrowing from AfDB to offset budget deficits and gender-responsive budgeting is therefore needed. AfDB puts resources into a budget and through dialogue with governments, identifies gender policy measures and triggers that must be realized for disbursement to take place.



More young journalists are embracing data journalism so there are greater opportunities for collaboration in this area.

Christine Mungai,
writer, journalist, 2018
Nieman Fellow at Harvard University,
senior producer for CNN As Equals,
and Lead Curator at Baraza Media Lab.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

- Media practitioners are calling for **enhanced collaboration** between gender data researchers/producers and the media who are crucial communicators of gender statistics and related information. **More young journalists are embracing data journalism** so there are greater opportunities of collaboration
- **More nuanced data** is needed to facilitate even more meaningful storytelling. There is huge need for data that goes beyond raw numbers and asks the question WHY to better understand phenomenon.
- **Data, including gender data, should be more people-centered** and less focused on programmatic outcomes so as to sharpen the focus on actual community needs. It should **also focus on men**, rather than just women as gender data relates to the sexes.
- **Timely gender data** is needed to facilitate effective and targeted interventions. The presentation, format, and relevance of gender data still remains a challenge; there should be more investment in gender data that is presented in more accessible formats that are relevant to diverse users including those outside research and academia.
- **Physical accessibility of gender data remains a challenge**; even when the gender data does exist it must be made more accessible to all users by not only having it in the correct format, but by having it available where they can easily be aware of its existence and retrieve it, in essence moving it from the shelf to table.
- **Political will and support is needed** to integrate gender data and policies into national politics. The budget-making process is as much a fiscal process as it is a political one. There must be concerted effort to build political will that drives policy and legislative agenda and mainstreaming of gender data into countries' developmental agendas.
- **Continued collaboration** is needed between AfDB and UN Women to identify gender policies that inform lending practices for budgetary support to continue growing the impact of gender data on policy and decision-making.
- **Continuous and timely training** will enhance greater understanding of the use of the [5R strategy](#): **Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute** unpaid work as well as **Reward** and **Represent** unpaid care workers
- **There is more work to be done with investing in and using time use data** to [make the care society a reality](#).
- **More time use advocacy is needed** for the redistribution of unpaid care work to support women to continue both their professional and personal lives for economic and social development.
- **Continuous training** is also needed for those in government, disseminators of gender data as well data generators themselves on generation and effective use of data.

USEFUL LINKS:

- [Agenda](#)
- [Speakers & Panelists](#)

Watch the roundtable on YouTube bit.ly/GenderDataIWD2024Stream

