East and Southern Africa Multi-Stakeholder Knowledge Seminar on Advancing Administrative Data Sources for Monitoring Gender-Related Sustainable Development Goals

8th August 2019 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi

Technical Report

Preamble

This is a technical report of a UN Women led Multi-Stakeholder Knowledge Seminar on Advancing Administrative Data Sources for Monitoring Gender-Related SDGs was held on 8th August 2019 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi-Kenya. The seminar brought together over 40 stakeholders including regional partners-CSOs, UN agencies, gender directorates and national statistical offices from selected countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia). The seminar initiated critical discussions on changing the discourse for African Member States in strengthening statistical systems and structures for generating, making accessible and recognizing administrative data for gender-responsive monitoring of the SDGs. It complemented regional and global SDGs monitoring and reporting mechanisms which often and, in most cases, solely use survey data from National Statistics Offices. The seminar also acted as a build up to the SDGs and the Beijing Platform for Action review and reporting in 2020, both of which continue experiencing implementation challenges related to inadequate disaggregated gender statistics. Specifically, the seminar inspired discussion among relevant stakeholders on additional sources of data for monitoring and reporting of gender related SDGs. It also provided an opportunity to present the findings and recommendations of the study on Advancing Administrative Data Sources for Monitoring Gender-Related Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. Further it discussed selected good practices showcasing the use of administrative data to generate priority gender indicators for addressing specific policy issues and leveraged on ways of operationalizing the findings and recommendations of the UN Women led study on administrative data in view of monitoring and reporting of gender-related SDGs by exploring partnerships with interested stakeholders in further advancing work on administrative data.

Seminar Structure

Discussion of the study was framed by a short expert presentation, followed by interactive dialogue among experts, partners and stakeholders. The interest and possibly the commitment of participating stakeholders to operationalize the findings and recommendations of the study or suggestions on way forward was discussed and firmed.

Synthesis of the Seminar

a. **Flagship Programme Initiative (FPI) on Making Every Woman and Girl Count- MEWGC**

Gender equality and women's empowerment are critical factors for achieving national, regional and global development objectives. It is therefore no surprise to note the emphasis placed on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the 2030 global Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda clearly promotes inclusive and sustainable development and highlights the desire to leave no one behind, including women and girls, in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The need to monitor progress towards SDG 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower Women and Girls) and gender-related targets and indicators in other SDGs, and to honor the *Leave No One Behind* commitment, led UN Women to develop a Flagship Programme Initiative (FPI) titled "Making Every Woman and Girl Count: Supporting the Monitoring and Implementation of the SDGs through Better Production and Use of Gender Statistics" in 2016.   The overall goal of the programme is "Gender statistics are available, accessible, and analyzed to inform policy making, advocacy and accountability for delivering gender equality and women's empowerment." The sustained production, access, dissemination and utilization of quality gender statistics to track the performance of the 54 gender-related indicators contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment is central to this programme.

The pathfinder countries within the UN Women Making Every Woman and Girl Count Flagship-MEWGC Programme was appreciated for generating, making accessible and motivating utilization of gender statistics. It presents a great opportunity for cross fertilization of countries in the context of South-South cooperation.

MEWGC programme ensure that data is consistent and influence policy decisions and programming, budgeting and investments in different sectors especially concerning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It looks specifically at National Statistics System (NSS) and National Statistical Offices (NSOs).

One of the key requirements for the availability, accessibility and use of gender statistics to monitor and deliver commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment is a well-coordinated, responsive and effective statistical system.

b. **UN Women Study on Harnessing the Potential of Administrative Data for monitoring and reporting on gender related SDGs in Africa**

In 2018/2019, UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office undertook a study on advancing Administrative Data Sources for Monitoring Gender-related Sustainable Development Goals. The study explored the potential of administrative data to complement other official statistics and fill in gender data gaps and strengthen reporting on the 2030 Agenda for All. As such, it examined the potential for

gender statistics for monitoring gender-specific SDG indicators and presents best practices in the use of gender statistics generated from administrative data for policy interventions. The study is based on three pathfinder[1] countries (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) and three non-pathfinder countries (Rwanda, Ethiopia and Malawi). However, it is optional for pathfinder countries to work on a specific sector of data.

The study revealed several bottlenecks in statistical systems with regards the production and use of gender statistics in Africa. Poor appreciation of the importance of gender statistics among both policy makers and statisticians; lack of clear and harmonized concepts, definitions and methodologies for producing gender statistics; inadequate staffing/gender statisticians and poor technical capacity of statisticians to produce gender statistics; paucity of surveys that concentrate solely on gender issues (e.g. standalone violence against women and girls surveys), and poor integration of gender statistics into ongoing statistical activities, such as census or large scale multi-purpose surveys. Other critical challenges in the region include weak communication and coordination among actors supporting gender statistics, fragmentation of gender data production across sectors and poorly developed administrative data systems. Where data exist, they either do not contain most of the required gender-sensitive indicators and most often analyses conducted by countries do not consider all possible and relevant gender indicators that could be generated from such data. All of this is further compounded by acute funding constraints for gender data collection and use in many statistical systems.

These challenges are a true reflection of the bottlenecks in obtaining data for reporting on the SDGs in several countries. As of December 2017, only 24 of the 54 gender-related indicators had data that spread from 2010 to the time of the evaluation. Also, just about 20 percent (11) of the 54 indicators are classified as Tier I. Of the remaining 43 indicators, 26 are Tier II, 15 are Tier III and two are multi-tier, making it difficult to monitor many of these indicators. This has culminated in the search for practical, convenient and more effective ways of monitoring and delivering on the SDGs.

c. Reaffirming the Importance of Data in Monitoring and Reporting on Gender Related SDGs

The seminar emphasized that data and statistics are key to leaving no one behind and ensuring inclusive reporting and monitoring for gender related SDGs. The UN Women study was appreciated as timely on providing the roadmap to strengthening administrative data to monitor SDGs and identify vulnerable people who are at risk of being left behind. It is important to bring in all the partners: not only the financial ones, but also those playing a key role in advancing SDGs and monitoring. Member States in Africa must put systems to identify those at risk of being left behind with proper mechanisms of inclusivity in development priorities.

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[1] As per the UN Women FPI on 'Better Production and Use of Gender Statistics for Evidence-based Localization of SDGs, 'pathfinder countries' are countries that have been identified to pilot the implementation of the UN Women programme on gender statistics-MEWGC

In order to achieve this, fully gender responsive data systems are needed to adequately monitor this agenda and build accountability mechanisms on duty bearers. It is important that this be done as part of transformative partnerships, rather than transactional partnerships.

It is important that stakeholders increase their efforts towards data collection for analysis and advocacy to inform evidenced based policy making and advocacy as well as address the data and statistical challenges that the member states are facing. Advocacy is key in working with the sector ministries and the NSOs. Given the complexity of the SDGs compared to MDGs, it is important for countries to set up coordination structures within governments that includes all stakeholders - civil societies, communities, women and girls, youth, persons with disability among others. It is also important to identify the gaps in financing SGDs, monitor them and identify what coalition countries needed to address the data gaps.

In the UN advocacy role, stakeholders are expected to share good practices related to coordination structures within the South-South learning. Governments have to make sure that they invest their own resources in statistics: usually little resources are allocated in national budgets and NSO's often are funded by donors which leads to biased data collection (in this case, donors demand only for relevant data that fulfils the aspirations of their needs). Member states are also encouraged to allocate appropriate resources to monitor their own data and statistical programs.

In Kenya, for example, there is a challenge of data management at community level where administrative data is managed at the Chief's office and the data is often manually recorded on paper. The way in which this data is recorded, handled and processed hinders quality data collection, access and utilization which in turn constrains decision making targeted at inclusivity. Standards of data management and handling at local level should be done in a way that can be accessed and used for policy formulation, investment and advocacy.

Citizen Generated Data (CDG) is an Important area that UN Women is currently working on and would complement efforts toward monitoring and reporting on gender related SDGs. Statistical capacity in monitoring SDGs is very important and relates to the availability of data to inform indicators. Stakeholders are encouraged to undertake related capacity strengthening initiatives for all statistical agencies in African member states.

Seminar Recommendations

- Increase efforts towards peer learning and south-south corporation among member states on statistical issues including administrative and project data. UN Women pathfinder and non-

pathfinder countries are encouraged to strengthen their collaboration to standardize the practices.

- Leverage on the voluntary national review processes for SDGs to ensure member states prioritize utilization and reporting of gender-related SDGs indicators and targets from administrative and/or project data.
- Ensure that member states through the data collection agencies fully disaggregate data to ensure no one is left behind and the various vulnerabilities of women and girls are actually captured for development and investment decisions.
- All member states are encouraged to develop national strategies for data generation, collection, dissemination, utilization and management. All the sectors and stakeholders (not only NSO) should be involved in the development of these strategies.
- On Citizen Generated Data, all stakeholders are encouraged to work member states to create a framework acceptable to all actors outlining mechanisms for leveraging citizen generated data and reports for SDG monitoring and reporting and in informing national investment and programming for gender equality.
- Member states are encouraged to strengthen community and local administrative reporting mechanisms and build stronger data collection, analysis and reporting structures to increase quality of community reports feeding into national reporting systems. Particularly the community structures are encouraged to build solid evidence on rural women that can drive local policies and programs.
- Data ownership and accountability in reporting SDGs should be at the center of development so that data is used for transformation and benefits of women and girls.
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms for data collection and analysis of administrative and project data at national level to ensure more acceptability, utilization and accountability by national statistical offices.

Conclusion

The Knowledge Seminar developed a set of actionable recommendations that supports and accelerates the implementation of the findings and recommendations of the UN Women administrative data study. Member States and all stakeholders committed to actionable pathways for operationalizing the recommendations of the study and intensifying efforts towards strengthening administrative data collection, analysis, access, dissemination and utilization at national level. In these efforts, all stakeholders are encouraged to prioritize investment and programming that can fill in the capacity and resource gaps facing the national statistical institutes at country level. Peer learning and knowledge management was largely discussed with a clear priority pointing to evidenced based research, full disaggregation of data, strengthening the coordination mechanism and acceptability and harmony of the tools and systems for administrative data collection in all countries participating at the seminar. It is our hope that African countries intensify their efforts towards acceptability and improving the quality of administrative, citizen generated data and project data to harness the potential of gender related SDGs and accrue benefits for women and girls while ensuring that no one is left behind. This will also ensure that national priorities, investments, policy and programming are focused on inclusivity and address the fundamental needs and aspirations of the most marginalized in all communities.

Seminar Contacts

Fatmata Lovetta Sesay-Regional Policy Advisor, Women Economic Empowerment-UN Women East and Southern Africa, fatmata.sesay@unwomen.org

Jack Onyisi Abebe-Regional Knowledge Management and Research Specialist-UN Women East and Southern Africa, jack.abebe@unwomen.org

About UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.