

Report on the
Joint ECE/UNDP Workshop on
Gender Statistics for Policy Monitoring and Benchmarking
(Orvieto, Italy, 9-10 October 2000)

Introduction

With the financial assistance of the UNDP, a two-day workshop was held in Orvieto, Italy, on 9-10 October 2000, to discuss Gender Statistics for Policy Monitoring and Benchmarking and a new project on a regional “Gender Statistics website for monitoring change”.

The main objectives of the workshop were to obtain an assessment of the situation in relation to gender issues and statistics in countries of the region and allow countries to review and discuss the proposal for a regional website. The workshop was also an opportunity for participating countries to assess how suitable and relevant their gender statistics are as a basis for policies and for monitoring progress and to what extent the gender perspective has been incorporated into their national policies and programs.

A large number of ECE member countries were represented at the workshop. Participants were from national statistical offices, national machineries dealing with women’s issues, NGOs and other policy making bodies concerned with gender issues and statistics.

The workshop was hosted by the National Statistical Office of Italy, ISTAT, with the support of the municipality of Orvieto. The detailed program of the workshop is attached as Annex 1.

Opening and presentation of the workshop

After a brief welcome speech by the mayor of Orvieto, Ms Lene Mikkelsen, Team Leader and focal point on gender statistics at the UN/ECE Statistical Division, formally opened the workshop. She provided an extensive description of the background, objectives and structure of the overall project being developed at ECE for the establishment of the gender statistics website and network. (See the document “Gender Statistics website for monitoring change-Project Proposal For Discussion at the ECE/UNDP Workshop and the ECE Work Session in Orvieto, 9-13 October, 2000-”, Working Paper No. 30/Rev. 1, reproduced in Annex 2 of this report)

Ms Juliette Hage, from UNDP Bratislava, presented UNDP work and strategy in addressing needs to improve gender statistics in the context of gender mainstreaming, in RBEC countries. She pointed out that five years after WSSD, while much has been achieved in some areas, progress on the commitments has been slow in many others. The shortfalls in achievement of social development goals can be attributed, among other factors, to the absence of clear targets and strategies, monitoring mechanisms and accountability measures.

On the development of gender statistics she underlined that there is still room for improvement in data collection and research activities in order for the national statistical system to better respond to the increasing demand for gender-based information at all levels.

Among the specific concerns that need to be addressed Ms Hage pointed at the overwhelming focus on monitoring inputs, often ignoring the assessment of processes (efficiency, inclusion, sustainability, etc.) and outcomes. She also underlined the lack of an information basis for changing perceptions and mind-sets in the process towards gender equality.

Ms Francesca Perucci, the consultant who assisted ECE in the formulation of the project, introduced the objectives and structure of workshop. (See “Presentation of the Workshop”, in Annex 3 of this report)

Structure and contents of the workshop

The workshop was organized in four different sessions, each dedicated to one topic. After the topic had been introduced by a main speaker, participants broke into groups to discuss in detail some of the issues raised. A rapporteur from each group reported on the outcome of the group discussion back to the plenary which further discussed the experiences and issues.

9 October- morning session

Session 1: Engendering national policies and plans

The main objective of the first session was to assess to what extent gender-related factors are incorporated in the relevant national policies in countries of the region, and identify the key policy areas and issues relevant to gender mainstreaming that will need to be considered in the regional work.

After a brief overview and some presentations from countries on “The gender perspective in national policies and plans in countries of Europe and the CIS”, a group discussion took place focussing on the following:

Part A - Gender perspective in relevant national policies and plans and related implications

Part B – Key policy areas and issues where the gender perspective needs to be considered

Group 1 – Rapporteur Ms Halus, National Statistical Commission of Romania

The discussion in group 1 focused on how users can develop a better assessment of policy making, on how national women’s machineries relate to the statistical system and how statistics are actually used in policy for monitoring but also can help in the design and formulation of policies.

Group 2 – Rapporteur Ms Jashi, Gender in Development UNDP Project Coordinator, Georgia

The outcome of the discussion was that positive changes had occurred in most CIS countries in relation to the strengthening of the role of national machineries concerned with women’s issues and to the establishment of effective mechanisms to engender policies. Some serious concerns, however, were also identified: a) gender factors are not a priority in most CIS countries, although they are crucial for the improvement of the economic situation; b) the imbalance in economic conditions of women and men is a key obstacle to equality; and c) globalization is having a negative impact on the socio-economic conditions of women’s employment, lack of social security and loss of professional skills, which also result in high migration and increasing violence and trafficking of women.

The group also identified some important trends in CIS countries as concerns gender mainstreaming:

- A shift from a focus on women only to a broader gender perspective
- The establishment of national machinery for gender mainstreaming
- The creation of new ways of collaboration between NGOs and governmental institutions

Plenary discussion

Several participants pointed at the importance of educating policy makers on gender issues as a key action in the strengthening of gender mainstreaming. Equality cannot be achieved

without the commitment of political decision-makers and authorities. Also, the need for the inclusion of gender issues into policies in all multi- and bi-lateral assistance programmes to countries was stressed.

In the context of gender mainstreaming, it was further recognized that the training of users on a correct use of gender statistics, especially for policy making was important.

Finally, the need for methodology and guidelines for gender mainstreaming, including clear definitions of gender and gender equality was also discussed.

9 October- afternoon session

Session 2: Gender statistics for gender mainstreaming

The second session was meant to provide the basis for further work on the development of a common set of indicators for monitoring women's progress relative to men in all critical areas in countries of the ECE region. The main presentation on "Gender statistics and indicators in Europe and the CIS region", given by Ms Mikkelsen, was followed by a group discussion on:

Part A – The role of statistics in facilitating gender mainstreaming

Part B – Gender statistics and indicators common to countries of the region

Group 1 – Rapporteur Ms Vihjalmsdottir, Statistics Iceland

On the role of statisticians, the first group agreed on the fact that statisticians should be proactive, creative, and brave in taking initiatives. Their role should not only be that of collecting data, but they should approach users and as necessary to help them define their statistical needs. Statisticians must be gender sensitive and for that some training may be useful .

The group also discussed the importance of clearly distinguishing between sex and gender, the crucial role of statisticians in establishing the dialogue with users and their responsibility for improving concepts and methods as well as to work towards the filling of data gaps.

On data analysis and gender reporting, most participants agreed that –although research is not routinely done in all national statistical offices- the official statistical system has some responsibility in doing secondary analysis and disseminating results.

On the second topic-the creation of a common list of indicators for the region-the group estimated that it would be a difficult task. Their proposal was to start off with an analysis of the indicators already existing in the international community and at the national level.

Group 2 – Rapporteur Ms Ibragimbekova, Gender in Development UNDP Project coordinator, Azerbaijan

The second group pointed at the importance of education on gender issues at all levels, to create awareness among the population on the importance of these issues and to create gender expertise. They also identified a legal framework as an important basis for building up gender expertise and strengthening the production and use of data. A problem often highlighted by participants, was the general lack of financial resources to do work in the gender field.

To develop a common list of indicators, the group agreed that extensive work and discussion among countries were needed to come up with a list. Also, they felt that in most CIS countries adequate data to address gender aspects in many of the important policy concerns are not yet available. They also expressed the need for developing national lists of needed indicators to address the specific concerns of countries.

Plenary discussion

Ms Mikkelsen pointed out the importance of developing lists of indicators in countries, identifying what data are already available and what needs to be developed over the next years to be able to fill up the gaps.

The discussion then focused on whether it was necessary to reach an agreement on a common list of indicators to be used as a unifying framework for the whole region, and what should be the basis for developing the list. There was general agreement that a regional list of common indicators would be useful and should be developed. However, such a list would not replace the need for a national list to reflect the specific circumstances in countries with regards to the 12 areas of the Beijing Platform.

It was also recommended that the list of indicators should be developed together with a common framework for all other activities necessary to improve gender statistics in the region.

10 October –morning session.

Session 3 (Originally Session 4): Developing a joint UNDP/ECE gender statistics network and website¹

This session was organized differently to allow for a longer plenary discussion, rather than group discussions, which was thought to be more productive for this particular session.

The general presentation of the website proposal, given by the consultant who assisted in the development of the project, Ms Perucci, was therefore followed by a plenary discussion on the content and structure of the proposed website, as well as on the planning and organization of future regional activities.² (The presentation of the regional website, as given by the consultant, is attached as Annex 4 to this report)

Plenary discussion-Part 1

The discussion focused on the objectives, targeted audience and structure of the website. There was a general consensus on the idea of the project, although participants had different views on whether the statistical part should be privileged or a broader perspective should be taken. Those who were in favour of giving more emphasis to statistics were not against the proposed structure containing also policy issues, but they thought important that the words “gender statistics” appears in the title of the website.

¹ Session 3 was moved to the afternoon of the second day, differently from the original programme. This followed suggestions from participants who wished to discuss the content of the website before moving on to looking at regional activities for the improvement of gender statistics.

² The outcome of the discussion on the proposed gender statistics website has been incorporated in the revised version of the proposal for the development of the regional network and website. The revised proposal, as agreed at the workshop and later at the work Session on Gender Statistics of the Conference of European Statisticians, will be posted in the ECE website to allow further reviews and comments from countries.

All participants, irrespective of their preference for the two alternatives – a more statistics-oriented or the broader approach – agreed on the basic objective of the website as an instrument to improve gender statistics, mainstreaming and policy monitoring.

One concern raised during the discussion of the website structure was that the logical structure of the website and headings used risked to create confusion between gender issues and gender statistics. It was agreed that the structure be revised and that policy areas be clearly distinguished from statistical fields.

There was also some concern about the project being too ambitious. Priorities would have to be set in the development of the website, so that the first parts could become operational in the coming year, while other parts could gradually be developed later according to the resources for the project. For instance, it was suggested to initially build the database on already existing data compilations – such as ECE's Women and Men in Europe and North America and other national booklets on gender statistics available in many countries of the region.

Some participants expressed an urgent need for a feedback instrument and a tool for communication and discussion. This was also seen as an indispensable way of setting up the basis for the regional project and initiating the interaction among countries. The network of experts proposed in the project could perhaps serve the purpose of a discussion network for feedback. The secretariat promised to look into the feasibility of such a network in the website.

Other important issues raised was the need for funding activities necessary for allowing those countries where resources are scarce, especially those allocated to gender statistics, to take an active role in the project.

Finally, it was agreed that the regional website would be both in English and Russian and available free of charge to all users.

Plenary discussion-Part 2

Some of the time originally allocated to the group discussion was used for a few presentations given by participants on topics considered of interest for the development of the regional project. In particular, the following presentations were made:

1. The representative of ECLAC, Ms Sonia Montano, talked about the experience in her region on the development of their website and list of gender indicators. She stressed the importance of the cooperation between statisticians and policy makers and explained the mechanism for selection of indicators. The basis for their work was the Beijing Platform as well as their regional Platform on gender issues. Target group of users were policy makers, especially within the national machineries. She pointed out that, with some technical assistance, all countries had been able to produce at least a sub-set of the agreed list of indicators. Finally, she spoke about their willingness to collaborate and share experience with the ECE region in this area of work.
2. The representatives of UN-system agencies/offices spoke about possible collaboration and their potential inputs to the website. The UN Division for the Advancement of Women, represented by Ms Maria Hartl, already has a website called Women Watch (in collaboration with UNIFEM and other UN agencies dealing with women's issues) with a lot of policy relevant material, which can be linked to the ECE/UNDP site. They can also provide some information on their activities in

connection with monitoring the implementation of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform in countries.

3. The UN Statistics Division, represented by Ms Erlinda Go, also offered to provide expertise and information. They already have several products posted in their website, including some excerpts from the latest version of “The World’s Women 2000.” They can also contribute information on existing international standards and methodological guidelines, as well as on ongoing activities – such as for instance on the measurement of all forms of work and time use surveys.
4. The representative of ILO, Ms Adriana Mata, spoke about ILO work in the area of gender and labour, and proposed collaboration and links to their own gender website.
5. Mr. Pehr Sundstrom, from Statistics Sweden, spoke about their experience with users and the office’s strategy for marketing their statistical products. He stressed the fact that the responsibility for contacting users lies with statisticians. Their strategy is based on a “active” dimension, which means that Statistics Sweden takes an active role by contacting users before users contact them. For instance, they have developed a database consisting information on characteristics and needs of 3,500 users from different fields, to whom Statistics Sweden regularly send information on their work.

On the issue of dissemination, there was some discussion on the importance of delivering the right message and information to the media, so that they would be interested in writing about it. The Canadian representative told the audience about their experience with their bulletin called the “Daily”, which is written in a “storytelling” style, with easily understandable material which journalists can use almost as reported.

On dissemination, Ms Mikkelsen informed the workshop that ECE has an Expert Group on Dissemination of Statistical Information to the Media”. It had been created in 1995 and meets annually, to discuss how to disseminate and deal with the media. Since all national statistical institutes have experienced some problems in that regard, the expert group has decided to prepare a handbook on delivering statistical information to the media.

Who would be the focal point(s) in countries responsible for getting the national information to the ECE for incorporation into the website? This very important issue was discussed at some length. For the statistical data the natural partner would clearly be the gender unit/focal point in the national statistical office, the problem was more who would provide the information on policies and laws and in what form? In transition countries, the office responsible could be the UNDP-supported “Gender and development units”. These units are usually having access to all information on policies and legislation, and on women’s machineries in the country. For countries members of the EU, it was suggested that a good starting point would be the office for equality in the Commission.

In other countries, information is spread in different locations and it might be difficult to identify one focal point for the project. Countries agreed that under those circumstances it is necessary to have a national coordinator responsible for the website project.

The necessary steps in the near future were also discussed. Some proposed having a regional meeting in Spring with the participation of concerned international organizations. In view of the costs involved for countries in participating in such a meeting, some thought that an e-mail communication to discuss the most important points would be preferable. A possible item to get feedback on would be the focal points and communication with countries.

Finally, the secretariat proposed that the revised regional website proposal would be posted on the ECE website page so that all countries could have a detailed look at it and suggest improvements. At the same time countries would be asked to propose gender indicators for the common list. The feedback received would then be discussed by an ad hoc task force composed by representatives from 5-6 countries to advise the secretariat on the indicators for the common list and other matters concerning contents of the website and procedures for communicating with countries and experts.

10 October-afternoon session

Session 4 (Originally session 3): Improving the production and use of gender statistics

The output of this last session was intended to serve as a basis for the identification of some common areas of work and the planning of regional and countries' activities to strengthen national statistical capacity in the production and use of gender statistics.

The introductory lecture, presented by Ms Hedman from Statistics Sweden, was followed by a plenary discussion.

Plenary discussion

The first part of the discussion focused on the importance of dealing with sex-based stereotypes. In almost all societies there are social norms and traditions that cause discrimination against women and which are extremely difficult to eradicate. Education, modernization and a concerted effort by the legislative and governing powers are probably all needed. The resurgence of polygamy in a few of the countries with Moslem populations was mentioned as causing harm to women, as this practice is not legally recognized and second wives and children born therefore have no rights. However, phenomena such as polygamy or forced prostitution and trafficking are very difficult to be measured because they are illegal and therefore can only be roughly and indirectly estimated. Some participants warned against the danger of introducing statistics on illegal aspects, when still many other priority areas are so poorly measured and studied.

The representative of the Netherlands presented their innovative exercise called the "Emancipation Monitor" which has the following four main functions: a) following developments in the emancipation process; b) conducting some policy evaluation; c) contributing towards the social and political debate; and d) improving the supply of information on the evolution of the emancipation process.

The emancipation monitor has three areas of work:

- 1) measuring actual positions of women and men in society, through indicators. Four groups, or priority fields, have been identified: education; division between paid and unpaid labour; decision-making; and violence against women
- 2) studying norms and values, focusing on the above four priority fields, through surveys on what people really think on specific issues.
- 3) analyzing the process through which inequality has been continuously re-established.

Following the presentation of the Dutch experience, the general reaction was that to the extent possible it would be important to include social attitudes in the website. However, the

concern was also raised that this would be too difficult as norms and attitudes have different meanings in different cultural contexts.

Several participants reported their own experience with studying and measuring social attitudes. For instance, Statistics Canada has attempted this study in two different surveys, although with many measurement problems, mainly because people tend to answer what they are expected to (“politically correct” answers).

Statistics Finland has also conducted an extensive effort in this area, the “Gender Barometer”. In Moldova, a study was carried out on the quality of relations between women and men. Finally, the Population Unit of ECE is undertaking a project on Generations and Gender, to explain social attitudes in regards to fertility and better understand recent fertility trends.

Participants also highlighted some of the problems in the way gender statistics are produced and used in the region and the main limitations in the existing statistical system. For example, official statistics available today do not reflect the dynamics of changes and statisticians need to expand the information basis to allow deeper analysis; norms and values should to the extent possible be included in statistical measurement; indicators should not be limited to measure inputs, but also processes and the different impacts on women and men (outcome).

The workshop was concluded with the general agreement that exchange of views on the proposed regional website and decisions on how to proceed had been very fruitful and should continue, first at the Work Session on Gender Statistics in the next couple of days, and afterwards via other means.

Annex 1

ECE/UNDP Workshop on Gender Statistics for Policy Monitoring and Benchmarking Workshop Programme

9 October

9.00 – 9.30 Opening and presentation of the workshop programme and resource persons

Session 1 – Engendering national policies and plans

(main output: the outcome of the discussion on the critical gender issues to be addressed by policies and plans in countries of the region, will be used as a basis for further work on the development of a common list of gender issues for the region. The list will be suitable to countries of the region and allow for some flexibility to be adapted to the specific circumstances of single countries.)

9.30 – 10.00 The gender perspective in national policies and plans in countries of the ECE region (Brief overview based on the country reports submitted to ECE)

10.00 – 11.30 Group discussion on:

- ◆ how gender perspective has been incorporated in the relevant national policies and what the implications have been.
- ◆ key policy areas and issues where the gender perspective needs to be considered.

11.30 – 12.00 Break

12.00 – 13.00 Plenary discussion on the identification of key gender issues for the region

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch break

Session 2 – Gender statistics for gender mainstreaming

(main output: the outcome of the discussion on needed gender statistics will be used as a basis for further work on the development of a common set of indicators for monitoring women's progress relative to men in all critical areas and relevant for countries in the ECE region. The set of indicators will be suitable to countries of the region and allow for some flexibility to be adapted to the specific circumstances of single countries.)

14.30 – 15.00 Gender statistics and indicators in countries of the ECE region (Brief overview based on the country reports submitted to ECE and

presentation of the indicators of the ECE regional publication recently released)

15.00 – 16.30 Group discussion on:

- ◆ the role of statistics to facilitate the gender mainstreaming
- ◆ the adequacy of existing statistics to address gender issues, inform policies and monitor the impact of policies and measures.
- ◆ gender statistics and indicators in the ECE region, their relevance to gender issues and effectiveness to inform existing policies

16.30 – 17.00 Break

17.00 – 18.00 Plenary discussion on the development of a common list of indicators for the region.

10 October

Session 3 – Improving the production and use of gender statistics

(main output: the outcome of the discussion on needs for improvement of gender statistics in the region will be used as a basis for the identification of some common areas of work and the planning of regional and countries activities to strengthen national statistical capacity in the production and use of gender statistics.)

9.30 – 10.00 Key areas for improvement in gender statistics in countries of the ECE region (Brief overview based on the country reports submitted to ECE)

10.00 – 11.30 Group discussion on:

- ◆ improving the production of gender statistics
- ◆ improving the presentation, dissemination and use of gender statistics

11.30 – 12.00 Break

12.00 – 13.00 Plenary discussion on the identification of some common areas of work in gender statistics for countries of the region

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch break

Session 4 – Developing a gender statistics network and website

(main output: the outcome of the discussion on the proposed gender statistics website will be incorporated into the final version of the project document and in the plans for the development of the regional network and website.)

14.30 – 15.00 Presentation of the draft project proposal for the development of a “Gender Statistics Website for monitoring change”

15.00 – 16.30 Group discussion on:

- ◆ the establishment of a network of users and producers concerned with gender issues
- ◆ the content of a regional website
- ◆ links to other websites and cooperation with other regions/countries outside ECE

16.30 – 17.00 Break

17.00 – 18.00 Plenary discussion on the development of a gender statistics website
and ideas for further work

Annex 2

Gender Statistics website for monitoring change *Project Proposal For Discussion at the ECE/UNDP Workshop and the ECE Work Session in Orvieto, 9-13 October,2000*

Introduction

After several world and regional conferences there is a growing awareness that a system of policy relevant gender statistics needs to be developed for monitoring changes in the situation of women compared to men. Moreover, a set of comparable gender indicators is needed for monitoring progress in gender equality and for making appropriate cross-country comparisons.

The need for gender analysis and for mainstreaming a gender perspective in policy development and in the implementation of programmes was stated in the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and was reaffirmed by the Special Session of the General Assembly, Beijing plus 5, in June 2000. The Platform urges Governments and international organizations to promote research and dissemination of information on a number of areas of concern and generate and disseminate gender statistics for planning and evaluation.³

Making existing statistics readily available to all potential users and policy relevant has always been an important component of the development of gender statistics both at the national and international level. Also, national statistical agencies have increasingly recognized the need for international comparability and for a commonly agreed framework and set of gender indicators to monitor advances.

The proposed project on “Gender Statistics website for monitoring change” aims at the overall improvement of the production and use of gender statistics in Europe and the CIS region through the establishment of a common framework of activities for the region and a network of users and producers concerned with gender issues and equality. The dissemination vehicle for the system of activities and for the development of the network would be a regional gender statistics website managed by the ECE.

The prototype regional website would serve as a common unifying framework for a series of inter-connected country websites. The common framework would ensure comparability of indicators and enable users to easily navigate country and regional websites to locate the desired information. Global indicators would be supplemented by additional lists to meet regional and national concerns.

The project builds on the extensive work already done in most countries of the ECE region for the development of gender statistics. A number of countries in the region have already established a gender statistics programme in the national statistical office or have a person who acts as focal point, many offices have developed a work plan and produced one or more issues of a gender statistics publication for wide dissemination. In addition, over the last

³ See Strategic Objective H.3 in the Beijing Platform for Action in Annex I.

decade, users-producers seminars and training workshops on gender statistics have been conducted in almost every part of the region.

Objectives and beneficiaries

In the long term, the outcome of the project will help strengthen national capacity to produce and disseminate gender statistics and reinforce gender mainstreaming in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring.

Immediate objectives will be:

- Make gender statistics and indicators produced in countries and at the regional and international levels, available to a wide range of users for policy as well as for national and international monitoring and benchmarking
- Create awareness among policy makers and planning bodies, NGOs, research institutions, gender issues advocates, the media and the public, on the importance of using gender statistics to inform policies, plans and programmes and to promote and monitor changes
- Increase the adoption of international standards and the use of guidelines and recommendations to improve international comparability
- Provide countries, especially those that are less advanced statistically, with easy access to international standards and guidelines and to existing studies, reports and data from other countries and regions.

Both data producers and users of gender statistics would benefit from the project. In particular, those in the central statistical offices responsible for the production and presentation of gender statistics would benefit from a continuous exchange of information and experience with other national and international statistical agencies, and from an easy access to a wide range of information and guidelines. Policy makers and planners, whose capacity for gender sensitive policy formulation and planning would be enhanced through the use of adequate gender statistics, would also benefit from the establishment of the website. Access to national and regional gender statistics and to related information useful in gender analysis, would also facilitate the work for advocacy, research and project formulation of international organizations and UN regional commission, NGOs, research institutions, and other gender equality advocates. Finally, the media, as the most important public opinion maker, would have access to user-friendly presentations of gender statistics and all other relevant information necessary to make a correct use of these statistics.

A brief description of project activities

The project would consist of two main components: the development of a gender statistics website and a set of activities, at the national and regional level, to promote the conceptual development of gender statistics and encourage the use of gender statistics in policy formulation and monitoring.

The regional joint UNDP/ECE website would contain gender indicators and information for monitoring national and international goals; guidelines and standards for concepts and classifications; “best practices” for presentation and analysis of gender statistics; a network of gender experts and statisticians; and other elements to maintain and strengthen the communication among users and producers concerned with gender issues at the national, regional and international level. The proposed structure of the regional website would take into account the

heterogeneity of users needs in different countries and regions. The system would consist of a central regional website and a series of national inter-connected websites. Links would also be provided to a series of other relevant websites-such as international agencies and research institutions. The information in the system would be integrated into a common framework to ensure comparability and ease of use.

The first step in the development of the ECE/UNDP website will be represented by the review and discussion of the proposed structure and content of the website, as developed by the Statistical Division of ECE, at the joint ECE/UNDP regional workshop in Orvieto, 9-10 October 2000.

Following the outcome of this first meeting, the proposal will be revised and finalized taking into consideration participants' views and needs. If needed a second regional meeting will be held to discuss more in detail the proposed list of statistics and indicators for monitoring women's progress relative to men in all relevant policy areas in countries of the ECE region, and to identify a common set of indicators for the region. Countries participating in the network can then adapt the common regional list to their specific circumstances, trying to maintain to the maximum extent possible the original framework, to allow easy intra-regional comparison.

Building on the outputs of the first two meetings, the regional website will progressively be put in place as countries provide the necessary data for the preparation of the regional database. Simultaneously, countries participating in the network may want to start to set up their national websites on the same lines of the regional one.

ECE plans to use the statistics and indicators compiled for the regional and national websites will be to produce studies and to monitor the situation of women and men in ECE countries. UNDP will make use of the website to strengthen its policy advocacy work. The website will also be very useful for UNDP's operational work at the country and regional levels. Other organisations or countries will also be able to benefit from the website to carry out studies at the regional and national levels.

Parallel to development and putting in place of the regional website, activities for the improvement of gender statistics in countries will be carried out. In particular:

- The CES expert group will meet to identify needs for the conceptual improvement in gender statistics. Special attention will be given to some key policy areas where gaps are most blatant (e.g. economic and political participation, empowerment, violence against women, etc.). Outputs of these meeting will be methodological reports and proposed common work areas for the improvement of gender statistics in the region.
- Organization of an international network of gender experts to provide an online discussion fora on the areas for improvement and necessary actions identified at the expert group meetings; the outcomes of the online debates will be posted in the website and used as a basis for further work.

The project will also set the basis for the expansion of the ECE/UNDP website and network to include other interested regional commissions and countries.

Executing agencies and participating countries

The project would be initiated by the Statistical Division of ECE in collaboration with UNDP/RBEC-Bratislava. The Conference of European Statistician's expert group on gender

statistics would act as a dedicated taskforce and be a main contributor of expertise to the project. Other international organizations concerned with gender issues and statistics will be invited to participate with expertise and data - such as UNIFEM, UNSD, WB, WHO, ILO, etc.

National statistical agencies will be key actors and will participate by providing the Statistical Division of ECE with the necessary statistics and information and by developing their own website on gender statistics in line with the common regional framework. Countries' participation on a voluntary but committed basis is essential.

It is estimated that implementing the project would take two to three years depending on resources made available.