



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

CES/2001/26
17 January 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

Forth-ninth plenary session
(Geneva, 11-13 June 2001)

Report of the October 2000
ECE Work Session on Gender Statistics

Prepared by the secretariat

1. The work session on Gender Statistics was held in Orvieto (Italy) from 11-13 October 2000 at the invitation of the National Statistical Institute of Italy (ISTAT) and with the support of the Commune of Orvieto.
2. The meeting was opened by Ms. Viviana Egidi, Director of Statistics on Population and Territory of ISTAT, and by Ms. Delia La Rocca, Chief of the Department of the Italian Ministry for Equal Opportunities.
3. The meeting was attended by over 70 participants representing the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Iceland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan. Representatives from the European Union participated as well as from the International Labour Office (ILO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT).
4. The provisional agenda (Working Paper No. INF.3) was adopted. Ms. Victoria Velkoff (U.S.A.) chaired the meeting.
5. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting on the basis of 26 submitted papers:

- (i) identification of national priority gender issues and the statistics needed for the implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes;
- (ii) gender sensitive indicators and broader gender equality indices;
- (iii) gender differences in formal and informal education, use and access to new technologies. Consequences for labour market access, career and earnings;
- (iv) gender dimension of aging populations in terms of differences in health, care needs and responsibilities, economic participation and income;
- (v) role of women and men in decision-making processes: changes in their participation in political life, business and other influential positions in the public sphere;
- (vi) regional website proposal and outcome of Workshop on Gender statistics for Policy monitoring.

6. The participants recommended that the Conference convene a further Work Session on Gender Statistics in two years time to discuss the following topics:

- (i) Gender differences as the consequence of macro-economic changes and policy decisions; use of institutional (business) surveys and registers as measurement tools for gender dimensions in economic development processes;
- (ii) Gender equality indicators at national, regional and local levels; identification of a gender perspective in statistics in order to establish feasible sets of indicators, with special attention to international comparability and policy relevance, common efforts of statisticians and policy-makers;
- (iii) Attitudes, norms and values as factors in changes of gender inequality and related measurement and methodological issues;
- (iv) Balancing work and family responsibilities in different life-cycle positions; time-use, labour force and other surveys as relevant monitoring vehicles.

7. There was general agreement that one area urgently needing further methodological development was violence against women and trafficking. However, rather than having this as one of the topics for future work, it was suggested that a whole meeting should be dedicated to discussing ways to make progress in this field which is of concern to several international organisations. The secretariat therefore agreed to look into possibilities for having a joint meeting with other organisations working on violence against women, such as WHO, UNDAW, UNICRI, etc.

8. In preparing contributions for the recommended next meeting, it was agreed that countries should be encouraged to co-operate and write papers together and to use longitudinal data.

9. The meeting thanked the secretariat for the preparation of the new edition of "Women and Men in Europe and North America 2000", which was made possible thanks to the financial support of the United States Census Bureau.

10. The secretariat presented in detail the new project on a regional "Gender statistics website for monitoring change" which had been launched at the Workshop on Gender Statistics for Monitoring and Benchmarking jointly organised by ECE and UNDP in Orvieto on 9-10 October 2000. The website would allow the monitoring of progress and provide a tool for the overall improvement of the production and use of gender statistics at both the national and international levels. Other than a common list of indicators to be agreed upon, the website will contain policy information and provide guidelines and standards for concepts and classifications. It is envisaged that it would have a mirror site in Russian. The website will build on the extensive work already done in countries, in international organisations and on the considerable database which has resulted from the two gender statistics publications produced by ECE.

11. In the discussion which took place, participants expressed strong interest and support for the website which was considered a useful tool for monitoring progress on the goals agreed at the Beijing Platform as well as a way of promoting the use of gender statistics and the harmonisation of the data.

The planned activities and mechanisms for building the website were discussed and agreed. An ad hoc Task Force of interested producers and users from a small number of countries would be constituted to work together with the secretariat and interested international agencies, to finalise the structure and content of the website. The participants recommended that the website project go ahead as planned and encouraged the secretariat to raise the necessary funds and expertise for realising the project and to assist those transition economies which needed help with preparing their national gender websites.

12. The work session recommended that the final project agreed upon in the ad hoc Task Force should be discussed at a workshop for countries and organisations participating in the website project. This workshop should, if possible, take place in the spring of 2001.

13. The secretariat informed the participants that a revised version of the website content and structure, incorporating the changes suggested during the discussion, would be posted in November on the UN/ECE webpage for further comments. Countries were encouraged to consider and comment on all parts of the contents, especially on the proposed indicators for the common list.

14. The meeting also recommended that the Conference give its full support to the implementation of the website project and encourage countries to participate in this regional activity. Furthermore, there is a need for the Conference to take into account the vast inter-country differences in the infrastructure required to produce and disseminate policy-relevant gender statistics and analysis and to consider ways to help those most in need.

15. The meeting adopted this report at its closing session.

16. The working papers presented at the work session and at the Joint ECE/UNDP workshop will remain available for download at the following internet addresses:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2000.10.gender.htm>

http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2000.10.gender_workshop.htm

Annex

Summary of the main points discussed at the Work Session on Gender Statistics

Session I: Identification of national priority gender issues and the statistics needed for the implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes

Documentation: Working Papers Nos. 3, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17

1. In the first presentation (WP No. 3), Statistics **Finland** reported on the activities carried out in Finland in the field of gender statistics and indicators, which include: work on indicators on decision-making and on participation in working life; a postal sample survey on violence against women; the Gender Barometer launched in 1998; studies on gender equality in working life. Statistics **Canada** (WP No. 9), presented an overview from a gender perspective of policies and major programs of the federal government, with reference in particular to the policies which require statistical activities for their development, implementation and evaluation. In the presentation of the **Romanian** paper (WP No. 10) the meeting was told about the priority areas they had identified for the improvement of gender statistics as well as the national Plan of Action which has just been defined. The paper submitted by **Tajikistan** (WP No. 11) described the national machinery and various initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality. Other issues discussed in the paper include: the consequences of polygamy, discrimination against women, limited availability of statistical indicators by sex and limited accessibility of available gender statistics to the general public. In the presentation of the **Italian** paper (WP No. 14) a summary was given of the activities promoted by the National Statistical Institute in the field of gender statistics, which include a survey on sexual harassment and the use of time-use surveys to highlight gender differences. A proposal of a law on gender statistics was also being promoted and suggestions were put forward for similar legislation at the EU level.

2. The paper presented by Statistics **Sweden** (WP No. 16) dealt with some aspects of the production of gender statistics in Sweden, which has a relatively long tradition, and with the many programs of international cooperation. The gender statistics production process was also presented with the support of a flowchart. The last presentation by **France** (WP No. 17) gave an overview of some policies which have been promoted to enhance equality between men and women in various fields. As for the existing gender statistics, the meeting was told that a lot of information is available from various sources but data collection is neither regular nor coordinated. Among the many indicators available, a selection was deemed necessary to identify those having explanatory power.

3. During the discussion that followed the main issues raised were:
- Policies in fields like equality in employment or women's rights on contraception and reproductive behavior have strong implications on family life, which need to be monitored: for instance, the increased participation of women to paid work contributed to fertility reduction in those countries where part-time work is not easily obtainable and child care services are not developed (like in Italy or Spain);
 - It would be desirable to statistically monitor all new policies, in order to evaluate their impact and inform policy-makers about the outcomes and about the possible need for corrections;
 - In some countries (Canada and France) the goal of gender policies is full equality between men and women, while others prefer to set progressive and more realistic targets, depending on the current situation;
 - When studying the division of labour between men and women, attention should be paid

not only to market labour, which is traditionally male-dominated, but also to non-market labour;

- Concerning violence against women, some countries felt that because of the particular sensitiveness of the issue is not feasible to have a statistical survey on this. Others believed that this kind of survey can be carried out but that careful considerations had to be given to find the best methodology;
- The importance of factors driving gender equality was discussed: in France, for instance, the political will was considered to be at the base of the improvements, while in the case of Norway economic and social development as well as increasing education among women were considered the most important factors.

Session II: Gender sensitive indicators and broader gender equality indices

Documentation: Working Papers Nos. 4, 7 and 15

4. The first presentation by Statistic **Netherlands** (WP No. 4) discussed the utility of the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) used in the Human Development Report of the UNDP to assess gender inequality as an aspect of human development. The applicability of the GDI to countries in the ECE region was evaluated and discussed. The second presentation by Statistics **Norway** (WP No. 7), concerned the development of a regional gender equality index. The process of construction of the index and the problems met were described, as well as the main results obtained. The last presentation by Statistics **Sweden** (WP No. 15) also was about some work they had restarted on the construction of a gender equality index for regional and local comparison. A gender database with selected indicators available at the municipal and county level was being built, which will then be used to calculate gender equality indexes. Statistics Sweden was being paid by the local councils to do the work.

5. The main points raised in the discussion were as follows:
- The availability of gender equality indicators and, in general, of gender statistics at the local (municipal and county) level was considered very important in many countries;
 - There was general agreement that indicators should take into account the situation of elderly people, both in countries with good social protection and in countries in transition where the situation of elderly people has deteriorated seriously in the past years;
 - It was stressed that one of the most critical aspects in the construction of the indexes is the weighting of the variables and in particular the careful choice of the weights;
 - The possibility of using disability-adjusted life expectancy (DALE) in the construction of the indexes instead of the life expectancy was discussed. WHO has for the first time this year calculated a comparable life expectancy that distinguishes years lived in disability. Similar measures are calculated by a number of countries but are not comparable because of using different disability scales.

Session III: Gender differences in formal and informal education, use and access to new technologies. Consequences for labour market access, career and earnings

Documentation: Working Papers Nos. 1 and 18

6. The first paper presented a study comparing gender differences in the transition from college to work in the **United States** (WP No. 1). The data presented show that women continue to earn less than men in first jobs out of college, even controlling for educational quality, experience, occupation and

industry. Although that there are signs that the fields of study are becoming less gender segregated, the labour market continues to be segregated. Moreover, women are more likely than men to accept job offers for lower paying and lower quality jobs. The second paper, submitted by **Italy** (WP No. 18), presented the results of a study on the differences among boys and girls in the access and use of new technologies for both cultural and recreational purposes, such as personal computers, videogames and video cassette recorders.

7. During the discussion on this topic, the following issues were raised:
- The results presented in the US study on the gender differences in the transition from college to work were considered very interesting and valid also in other countries;
 - It was noted that in many countries, as was the case in the Scandinavian countries, women tend to seek jobs in the public sector, where the salary is on average lower but there are better conditions in case of maternity and it is easier to reconcile work and family needs;
 - In relation to the study on the use of technology by boys and girls, it was suggested that future studies take in account the presence of siblings by sex and the education of mother and father separately as explanatory variables.

Session IV: Gender dimension of aging populations in terms of differences in health, care needs and responsibilities, economic participation and income

Documentation: Working Papers Nos. 5, 8, 12, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23

8. The papers were presented in two sub-sessions. In the first sub-session the paper submitted by **Switzerland** (WP No. 23) described the living conditions of elderly people in that country, using data from the 1997 Health Survey. There appear to be important differences between elderly men and women, in many cases due to the fact that women live longer than men and therefore tend to be widowed and to live alone more often than men. The second paper, submitted by **Poland** (WP No. 8), focussed on the demographic and social diversification of the ageing process by gender, dealing with issues like: age structure of elderly males and females, evolution of life expectancy at old ages, health status, economic activity, marital status and the composition of households with old people. The presentation by **Italy** (WP No. 21) discussed perceived satisfaction with life of old people and compared this by gender, economic standing, health status, family, friends, leisure time and work. A clustering method was used to identify different typologies of behavior among old people. The last paper of the first sub-session, also by **Italy** (WP No. 22), focussed on age and gender differences in security perception. The security perception was analyzed in relation to individual characteristics, territorial context, frequency of crime, fear about crime and social disorder.

9. During the discussion which took place after the presentation of the papers, the following points emerged:
- It was underlined that more information is needed on the life conditions of old people, especially in transition countries where pensions are in general very low. The situation in these countries is particularly difficult for old women because they retire earlier and live longer than men; since pensions are calculated on the basis of the years of contributions and of the life expectancy at retirement age, pensions are substantially lower for women than for men;
 - It was also noted with regret that in most transition countries the main source of information about old people is the census but that for financial reasons the censuses planned in 1999 have, in many countries, been postponed to 2002. With no new demographic and economic data available, it will be difficult to evaluate the social costs of the economic transition;

- Attention was drawn to the fact that most survey and studies about old people do not include people living in institutions. Since they are usually in worse conditions than the average, this may lead to the false impression that old people in general are doing better than they actually are;
- With reference to the study on security perception, it was suggested to investigate the impact of being victim of a crime on the other members of the victim's household; it was also suggested to study the role of the media, because in some countries the fear of crime is actually very high compared to the actual risk of being victim of crimes.

10. The second sub-session was opened with a paper presented by **Canada** (WP No. 5) and dedicated to the change in incomes of younger retired women and men in the past 30 years. The data presented show that the private pensions represents an increasing percentage of the total income for both young retired women and men, but the percentage of women receiving pensions and the average amounts are lower than those of men, due to their lower lifetime participation in the labour force. The paper presented by **Italy** (WP No. 20) focused on gender differences in health conditions of elderly people. Clear differences emerged between "young-olds" who are in fairly good health and relatively active, and "old-olds". Among the old-olds, in particular, women suffer from chronic illnesses earlier than men and live longer time with the debilitating effects of these pathologies. The paper presented by **Austria** (WP No. 12) discussed gender related differences regarding received and provided assistance among people aged 60 or more. Their data show that assistance is mainly provided by relatives. While old men can count both on their spouses or companions and on their daughters (including daughters-in-law), old women in most cases can rely only on their daughters. Data on assistance provided by seniors were also presented. The last paper was presented by **Italy** (WP No. 19) and discussed the profound changes in the informal support network following the social and demographic transformations which have taken place in Italy in the last decades. Women are still at the center of the informal support network, however, since they are increasingly integrated in the labour market, it is more and more difficult for them to take care of their small children and their old parents, therefore compensation mechanisms will need to be implemented.

11. The following main points were raised in the discussion:
- It was noted that when the health status of elderly people is studied, the so-called selection effect must be taken in account: for instance, only stronger men survive, therefore they may seem to be on average stronger than women;
 - With reference to the study of informal support network, it was proposed to look at the relations between the informal and the formal support, to see how the availability of public services can modify the informal network and reduce the burden on women.

Session V: Role of women and men in decision-making processes: changes in their participation in political life, business and other influential positions in the public sphere

Documentation: Working Papers Nos. 2, 6 and 13

12. The first paper, submitted by **Albania** (WP No. 2), presented an overview of the role of women and men in decision-making positions in Albania. During the communist rule, about one third of members of the parliament were women, but in fact their influence in the public life was limited. After the end of the communist regime, the political arena and decision-making positions continue to be dominated by men and women's share has fallen in the parliament. The second paper, presented by **Finland** (WP No. 16) concerned the development of indicators to measure progress in women in

decision-making positions. The available data show that the percentage of women is relatively high in government and municipal bodies (where a 40% quota provision has been set) and in elective and political bodies, while still low in the private sector, in the universities and in other organisations. The last paper, presented by Statistic **Netherlands** (WP No. 13), was about a new tool they had created, the “Emancipation Monitor”. One of the themes which will be regularly explored there is the representation of women and men in political and social decision-making. The “thickness” of the glass ceiling impeding women to access to higher decision-making positions is examined by branch of industry and company size. It was found that there are substantial differences among various sectors and only in the education sector is the share of women in senior positions as high as the total share of women in that sector. The meeting was also told that they had plans of also measuring “attitudes” and the “process” by which inequality is established but that this would be more difficult to measure statistically.

13. In the discussion which followed, the following main points were highlighted:
- It was suggested that, when considering the decision-power of a job, the number of supervised people could be considered as an indicator of the responsibility associated with the position;
 - Progress is noticeable in many countries in the proportion of women who gain access to high positions with decision power, everywhere, however, top positions are still dominated by men;
 - The usefulness of quotas was discussed, as well as the selection of the sectors in which they should be adopted and their levels;
 - As for the role of women in the UN system, it was mentioned that the situation is monitored and progresses have been made in the past years; the goal in the UN is 50% of women in professional positions, but the time frame to reach this goal has been postponed several times.

Session VI: Regional website proposal and outcome of Workshop on Gender statistics for Policy monitoring

Documentation: Working Paper No. 30/Rev.1 (Project Web 1)

14. The expert group as well as the international organisations present welcomed the idea of the website and a lively discussion followed the presentation. There was general agreement that it would be very useful to have a tool for monitoring progress, however, it also was a very ambitious project and therefore dependent on outside funding and country collaboration. Since the website would contain other relevant information than gender statistics, it was important that the difference between gender statistics and gender issues was clearly explained. To avoid confusion, it was suggested to use different headings for the two.

15. Several of the issues, still to be solved, were discussed. For instance, the funds the secretariat plans to raise to implement the project would they be sufficient to also help those countries needing assistance with their national website? While technical assistance and ad-hoc training were part of the project plans, the amount of funding would determine how much could be done in this aspect. It was suggested that use was made also of bi-lateral assistance through foreign aid to specific countries. Furthermore, the secretariat was encouraged to ask for expertise on loan from advanced national statistical offices.

16. It was also observed that the time frame of the project is quite extended and therefore the website would not be operational before a few years, however countries may need to exchange

information in the short term; some possible solutions to this problem were proposed, including the establishment of a network of experts before the website is actually operational or the creation of a first "beta" version of the website to be tested by volunteers.

17. The balance between statistical information and policy content to be posted in the website was discussed. There are topics, for instance, which are considered policy priorities but for which the available statistical information is very limited: for these areas the website could be an opportunity to show publicly the need for more data.

18. It was underlined that both users and producers of statistics should be part of the network and that to have a mirror site in Russian would be essential for ensuring as wide a use as possible. It was also considered useful to have a meeting of countries interested in participating in the website, once the Ad Hoc task force had finalized the content and structure of the website.

19. It was agreed that for the exchange of statistical information the national statistical office would be the natural partner, while for the policy related information the best solution would be to have a focal point in each country, which could be either the UNDP gender focal point, where they exists, a government department or some office for gender equality, depending on the situation in the different countries.

20. The Regional Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) expressed satisfaction with the proposed website which could help them in their own plans for creating something similar for their region. Once created, the linking of the two would be mutually interesting.

Session VII: Progress in the collection of national and international gender statistics

Documentation: Working Paper No. 24 and 29

21. The **United States** Bureau of the Census (WP No. 24) presented some general information about the 2000 population census, which will enable researchers and policy-makers to update the profile of women in the country at various geographical levels and to carry out in-depth analyses of gender issues. The **UN Division for the Advancement of Women** (WP No. 29) updated the meeting on the implementation of the recommendations on gender statistics and indicators agreed at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing) and the "Beijing +5" Special Session of the General Assembly. These recommendations refer, among other things, to data collection and support to statistical offices through international cooperation. Selected statistical areas and issues have been identified, where further work is required: gender mainstreaming, women and economy (poverty), violence against women, health, education, women with disabilities, indigenous women. The commitment of the countries to progress in this field is testified by the very high number of national action plans and national reports submitted. The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** reported on its program on advancing gender issues in labour statistics. The program is aimed at identifying key issues for the gender agenda and promoting work on concepts and definitions, measurement issues and data presentation. Future activities include a database on labour statistics with data available by sex but also by family composition; in addition, guidelines to incorporate gender issues in labour statistics should be presented to the next Conference of Labour Statisticians which will take place on 2003.

The representative of the **UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)** presented an overview of the activities promoted by the Commission. In addition to work in the field of data collection and analysis, efforts have been made to better integrate the use of gender statistics and indicators and sex-disaggregated data in the process of policy-making for gender equality. At this scope, a network has been set up to promote the dialogue among the various subjects involved:

statisticians, academicians, NGOs, government, politicians and administrators. The **UN Statistical Division** described briefly the various activities related to gender statistics. In the field of compilation and dissemination, the main products are the publication *World's Women 2000* and the 4th version of the database on CD-Rom WISTAT, which contains data by sex on nine areas, including violence against women, health, causes of death and decision-making. Among the activities in the field of development of methodologies, the recent work in the fields of time use surveys (which includes the development of a classification of daily activities suitable for developing countries) and disability statistics was described. A representative of the Women and Science Sector of the **European Commission** (DG Research) briefed the meeting on the situation about women and science in the EU. Women represents only a very small proportion of research and development personnel in all EU countries, therefore the research agenda is developed mainly by men and mostly for men. A report has been presented, called "Science policies in the European Union – Promoting excellence through mainstreaming gender equality". In order to change the situation and promote gender equality in this sector, data by gender are required on research personnel and research activities at various levels. The representatives of **Portugal** and **Norway** also reported on the national progress in the production and dissemination of gender statistics and in the methodological developments of in this field.
