

**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

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Topic (ii) Gender equality indicators

**GENDER INDICATORS AND POLICIES:  
LINKING STATISTICS WITH POLICY INITIATIVES**

Submitted by UNECE<sup>1</sup>

**Invited Paper**

As follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 (FWCW), initiatives to develop standard sets of indicators to measure the progress made to achieve gender equality have been started worldwide. UNECE Statistical Division's project on gender statistics is one of such responses.

In the course of the project, a common set of policy indicators was developed to monitor changes in the situation of women compared to men. The set of indicators is divided into seven parts covering the following areas: (1) population, (2) families and households, (3) work and the economy, (4) education and communication, (5) public life and decision making, (6) health, (7) crime and violence. Some other areas, like living conditions, social protection and environment were also considered but the identification of relevant indicators these areas was left for future discussions.

One of the aims of the project was to link statistics and policies. Statisticians have to be aware of what is going on in the gender policy area to identify what data is needed. Statisticians want to prepare good quality data – and relevance is one important aspect of data quality. Policy makers need to be aware of what data are available for planning, implementing and monitoring the programmes.

This paper attempts to link gender indicators to policies based on our experience with developing the UNECE gender website for Europe and North America. The website provides both data and examples of programmes carried out in countries to achieve gender equality. The paper looks more closely at how feasible it is to make a direct link between these two. It aims to:

- 1) establish a link between gender policies and indicators (data) by looking at
  - what are the different areas where gender inequality can be observed, what are the main concerns;
  - which policy programmes are carried out to address these concerns;
  - is statistical data available to monitor the situation of women and men in these areas;
- 2) identify emerging issues
  - gender concerns and policies where there are no indicators and not enough data;
  - areas where there are data but no policies (e.g. the data shows that policy intervention would be needed);
- 3) evaluate the efficiency of gender policies.

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The last issue is quite demanding as it would require very detailed data. Also, the different policy areas are very much interrelated, and policies that target one area can have an outcome in another area (e.g. education and labour). Distinction needs to be made between the policies with short-term objectives aimed at solving concrete immediate problems or needs, and long-term strategic objectives targeted at the causes of the problems.

An important notion in this connection is benchmarking, that is the establishment of a criterion or a standard against which an objective is set and progress is measured. The Workshop in Orvieto that laid the groundwork for the UNECE gender project was called a “Workshop on gender statistics for policy monitoring and benchmarking”. How useful can benchmarking be in gender statistics and in what context is benchmarking most appropriate to measure progress (individual, country basis, regional comparison within a country or cross-country comparisons) needs yet to be discussed.