United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Conference of European Statisticians

Guidance on Communicating Gender Statistics

Prepared by
the Task Force on Communicating Gender Statistics

Acknowledgements

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2) Communicating statistics on gender-based violence, Andrew Moore;
3) The language of gender in statistical communication, Karen Hurrell;
4) Maintaining impartiality when communicating gender statistics, Marjut Pietiläinen;
5) Interacting with users of gender statistics, Cristina Freguja and Sara Demofonti;
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Contents

Acknowledgements ii
Acronyms v
I. Introduction 1
A. Background 1
B. Establishment and the work of the Task Force 1
C. First output: a set of electronic guidance notes 2
D. Second output: an online repository of good practice examples 2
E. Housing and maintaining the products 3
II. Guidance notes 4
A. Guidance note 1 - Communicating about the Gender Pay Gap 4
1. The issue 4
2. Challenges 4
3. Recommendations 5
4. Examples 6
B. Guidance note 2 - Communicating statistics on gender-based violence 7
1. The issue 7
2. Challenges 8
3. Recommendations 9
4. Examples 9
5. References and links 11
C. Guidance note 3 - The language of gender in statistical communication 12
1. The issue 12
2. Challenges 12
3. Recommendations 13
4. Examples 14
D. Guidance note 4 - Maintaining impartiality when communicating gender statistics 14
1. The issue 14
2. Challenges 15
3. Recommendations 15
4. Examples 16
5. References and links 16
E. Guidance note 5 - Interacting with users of gender statistics 17
1. The issue 17
2. Challenges 17
3. Recommendations 18

4. Examples 18
5. References and links 19
F. Guidance note 6 - Addressing gaps in gender statistics 19
1. The issue 19
2. Challenges 20
3. Recommendations 20
4. Examples 21
5. References and links 22
III. Annex 23
Mock-up of the Guidance Note Template 23

Acronyms

CES	Conference of European Statisticians
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based violence
GPG	Gender Pay Gap
ILO	International Labour Organization
LFS	Labour Force Survey
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics (United Kingdom)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
NACE	Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NSO	National Statistical Office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. Gender statistics, like statistics on any other topic, are valuable to users only if they are easily found and accessible, and if users find them relevant and easy to understand. The responsibility of national statistics offices (NSOs) does not stop at production or dissemination. Action must be taken to communicate gender statistics, that is to promote their awareness, understanding and use. This is true of all statistical areas but brings particular challenges for gender statistics.

2. Firstly, gender-related data come from many different sources, may be spread around many products and hard to find, or in some cases, not published at all. Secondly, gender issues occupy a unique place in policymaking. This means that NSOs must take extra care when communicating gender statistics to balance the need to remain impartial with the obligation to produce relevant data to inform policymaking and answer the needs of those who require the data. Producers of gender statistics are thus faced with a need to communicate the statistics themselves and also their meaning and value.

3. The growing importance of communication is not unique to gender statistics. For example, the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) in 2018 developed a strategic framework for communicating with data users and the general public. UNECE has produced guidance in the form of the Making Data Meaningful series of publications. The 2010 publication Developing Gender Statistics: A Practical Tool includes a chapter on "Improving the use of gender statistics" which clarifies the distinction between communication and dissemination.

B. Establishment and the work of the Task Force

4. The CES Bureau established the Task Force on communicating gender statistics in February 2018 (terms of reference in document ECE/CES/BUR/2018/FEB/8[1]). The objective of the Task Force was to develop guidance for NSOs and other producers of gender statistics on communicating gender statistics, focusing on both communication with policymakers and with the public. The Task Force concentrated on those aspects that are specific or especially pertinent to gender statistics, while ensuring coherence with and avoiding duplication of other initiatives on statistical dissemination and communication.

5. The terms of reference called for the Task Force to identify communication challenges for gender statistics; review current practices and collect examples of good practice; and produce a set of recommendations for tackling the challenges identified.

6. CES member countries and international organizations nominated 37 individuals representing 18 countries[2,] 7 organizations[3] and one independent expert. The Task Force was chaired by Helen Cahill of Ireland.

7. The Task Force decided not to produce a traditional final report in printed form. Instead, the recommendations are presented in a concise electronic format of guidance notes since the

[1] Additional information on Task Force here.

[2] Albania, Australia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Czechia, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom.

[3] CIS-Stat, Council of Europe, Data2X, Eurostat, UN Women, UNECE, UNICEF.

target audience of the products are primarily those working in communications in statistical offices (among others).

8. The Task Force began its work with a brainstorming exercise. After distilling down the ideas generated, the Task Force decided to focus on the six major thematic areas identified during the brainstorming exercise on which guidance would be helpful for those involved in the production, dissemination and communication of gender statistics.

C. First output: a set of electronic guidance notes

9. The Task Force identified six major thematic areas where guidance would be helpful for those who produce and/or disseminate and communicate gender statistics. The themes are:

(a) Communicating about the Gender Pay Gap;
(b) Communicating statistics on gender-based violence;
(c) The language of gender in statistical communication;
(d) Maintaining impartiality when communicating gender statistics;
(e) Interacting with users of gender statistics;
(f) Addressing data gaps in gender statistics.

10. Each of these six guidance notes follow a common template developed by the group. The guidance notes contain the following brief sections:

(a) Explanation of what the issue or challenge is;
(b) Explanation of why it poses a particular challenge for gender statistics;
(c) Recommendations;
(d) Examples, including case studies, images and links.

11. The Task Force prepared the six guidance notes collaboratively. For each theme a leader was identified to coordinate the work. Contact information for the theme leader will be included in each electronic guidance note. The guidance notes are presented in section II.

12. The guidance notes are planned to be hosted on a dedicated website (see subsection E "Housing and maintaining the products").

D. Second output: an online repository of good practice examples

13. In line with the terms of reference, the Task Force decided to establish a repository of examples of good practice, organized in a systematic way, enabling people to consult and learn from the experience of others.

14. The repository would be a simple database-like tool, using a common template that highlights key features, including the type of practice, the thematic area(s) to which it pertains, the challenges encountered, the solutions identified, and sources to which a reader may refer for more information.

15. The repository is currently hosted on the UNECE wiki and can be consulted online here. Although at the moment the repository includes a limited number of examples, countries and international organizations can continue to submit examples of good practices so that the content of the repository will increase and become richer over time.

16. It is planned that the repository will be hosted on a dedicated website (see section E "Housing and maintaining the products").

E. Housing and maintaining the products

17. The guidance notes and the repository of good practices will be hosted on a dedicated website. A contractor will be hired to develop this website, with funds kindly made available by UN Women.

18. The guidance notes will be presented on the website using a common, visually appealing design with graphical and interactive elements capitalizing on the possibilities of electronic rather than paper format. A mock-up of the guidance note template is provided in the annex.

II. Guidance notes

A. Guidance note 1 - Communicating about the Gender Pay Gap

1. The issue

19. The Gender Pay Gap (GPG) is the difference between the gross employment earnings of women and men and is usually expressed as the difference between male and female earnings as a proportion of male earnings. This observed GPG is commonly referred to as the unadjusted GPG.

20. There is currently no internationally recognised standard for measuring GPG or standard language around GPG measures. This leaves considerable scope on how to measure GPG and it also makes international comparisons difficult. However, for Member States of the European Union, the unadjusted gender pay gap is calculated according to a uniform formula and published with a uniform definition, which enables comparability between countries. This calculation is done using data from the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES) and is limited to enterprises with at least ten employees in NACE sectors B to S, excluding O.

21. There is confusion among policy makers and the general public as to the size of GPG, partly because of the variability on how it is measured. Factors which can affect the size of GPG include:

(a) Which workers are included in the sample from which GPG is estimated (all workers or full-time workers only)?
(b) What earnings are counted (annual, weekly, monthly, or hourly; regular pay or overtime)?
(c) How are the earnings calculated (average or median)?
(d) Data source (household or enterprise survey or administrative data)

22. The adjusted GPG takes into account some factors which influence GPG, such as differences in education, occupation, industry, number of hours worked, parenthood status and so on. The adjusted GPG is usually smaller than GPG, but that does not mean that earnings inequality between women and men is less than the unadjusted GPG. The adjusted GPG does not account for all factors influencing GPG, as some cannot be directly measured. Also, gender differences in education, occupation, and industry may themselves be the outcome of gendered processes. Therefore, the adjusted GPG should not be interpreted as an estimate of gender-based discrimination in the labour market.

23. While adjusting GPG for various factors helps us to understand the mechanisms that contribute to it, the adjusted GPG represents a hypothetical scenario in which women and men are equally endowed with human capital and equivalently dispersed across occupations and industries and participate equally in unpaid work.

2. Challenges

24. The choices women make and the options available to them are generally assumed to drive GPG, but this ignores both the cultural norms which prevail when individuals make decisions about their labour supply, occupation and industry, and gender-based discrimination in the labour market.

25. Due to the lack of data on unpaid work, producers of gender statistics have little evidence to challenge the choice discourse related to gender differences in labour supply, occupation and industry. Cultural norms and social infrastructure (child- and elderly-care facilities, for example) are only visible in their outcomes (e.g., gender differences in labour force participation, work hours, occupation and industry). Similarly, gender-based discrimination cannot usually be directly measured, but, rather, must be inferred by ruling out other explanations for the gender pay gap.

26. When measured from weekly, monthly or annual earnings, the GPG partly reflects gender differences in paid work hours. Gender differences in time spent on unpaid work within the home contribute to gender differences in paid work hours. Given this relationship between paid and unpaid work, understanding the gender pay gap requires micro data that cover both topics. Many studies of GPG use Labour Force Surveys or Income Surveys. However, these surveys do not always include variables on unpaid work, nor do administrative data.

3. Recommendations

27. Weigh the pros and cons associated with estimating GPG from different national data sources (household or enterprise survey or administrative data), and clearly identify for consumers the limitations that characterize the data source chosen for estimating the GPG.

28. Provide clear metadata and context so users understand what a given estimate means:

(a) Clearly delineate the characteristics of the population from which GPG is estimated (e.g., age and/or exclusion of the self-employed population);
(b) Clearly specify how earnings are measured;
(c) Indicate when a product is dealing with the unadjusted GPG vs. the adjusted GPG, and include a note explaining why they differ;
(d) If multiple measures of GPG are presented in a given product or if definitions vary across data sources, include a note explaining why they differ and report these calculations in one easy-to-find source.

29. Use gross earnings for international comparisons of GPG.

30. Define a clear message according to target audiences and expected outcomes.

31. Once the message is defined, NSOs should choose best visualization tools to:

(a) Compare estimates (indicators);
(b) Highlight one key estimate;
(c) Show trends over time;
(d) Show within-country/region geographic variation using mapping tools.

32. If preparing infostories, plan them in a modular way so that each module can be shared by users in different social media and make a longer-term plan to relate them to other themes or stories.

33. Be aware that GPG may be greater at the higher end of the earnings distribution than the bottom; when possible, consider different points along the earnings distribution, not just the mean or median.

4. Examples

34. Example 1: '[Measuring and analysing the gender pay gap: A conceptual and methodological overview]', a report from Statistics Canada, published on 30 August 2019. This report aims to increase literacy about GPG among the general public and policy makers and to describe a consistent methodology for measuring GPG. This report was challenging to produce as NSOs are required to be neutral, but all issues related to gender can be constructed as 'political'.

35. Example 2: Eurostat has a webpage providing a brief overview of adjusted and unadjusted GPG statistics, with an interactive graphic as the headline feature and links to more detailed resources.

36. Example 3: There are more detailed resources on the Eurostat website, including a report 'A decomposition of the unadjusted gender pay gap using Structure of Earnings Survey data'. This publication provides information on the data source, methodology and statistical software used by Eurostat to decompose the unadjusted GPG, and the results of this decomposition.

37. Example 4: Mexico has published a gender atlas with a key set of labour gender related indicators. Users can download the metadata for every indicator.

38. Example 5: The International Labour Organization's Infostories identify 6 key messages:

(a) Achieve equal pay;
(b) Tackle occupation segregation;
(c) Eliminate discrimination;
(d) Promote work-family balance;
(e) Create quality care jobs;
(f) Guard against downturns.

39. Example 6: OECD, ILO, UN Women and other partners have integrated a set of resource documents that may be helpful reference documents for NSOs:

(a) Tackling sex discrimination through pay equity;
(b) Bridging the gap;
(c) Understanding the gender pay gap;
(d) Equal Pay International Coalition resources;
(e) How big is the gender pay gap in your country?

40. Example 7: In Germany, the German SES (VSE) has been extended to the overall economy since 2014. However, Germany publishes the unadjusted GPG as defined by Eurostat as the leading variant in the press release. In addition, they publish the results for the overall economy for the SES survey year in other publications.

41. Example 8: The unadjusted GPG is calculated uniformly across the European Union according to this formula: GPG = [(gross hourly earnings of male paid employees less gross hourly earnings of female paid employees) / gross hourly earnings male employees], and is expressed as a percentage. The average earnings used for the GPG are calculated as an arithmetic mean. The Oaxaca Blinder decomposition for the adjusted GPG is used by Eurostat and several countries. However, the actual selection of variables or the specification for the regression may vary. To explain the different intentions of the adjusted and unadjusted GPG to the data user, Germany uses text and video.

42. Example 9: In Australia, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) gender pay gap statistics page is a good example of providing statistics on GPG using multiple measures.

B. Guidance note 2 - Communicating statistics on gender-based violence

1. The issue

43. “Gender-based violence is rooted in and reinforces gender inequalities and cannot be understood outside the social structures, gender norms and roles that support and justify it. Gender-based violence harms [people], families, communities and societies. It is a human rights violation and one of the most pervasive forms of gender-based inequality”[4].

44. Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence directed against a person because of their gender. It can be experienced by both women and men, but the majority of victims are female. GBV covers all acts that result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or other suffering. Examples include domestic violence, sex-based harassment, forced marriage and online violence.

45. GBV is a sensitive issue and can be under-reported, either to the police, and therefore not picked up in administrative data, or not freely answered in a survey[5]. Communication around GBV not only provides data to policymakers and the public but also helps increase awareness in society of GBV as an issue.

46. Communicating statistics on gender-based violence (GBV) is not straightforward, as the issue is very sensitive both socially and politically. The collection, discussion and dissemination of GBV data can attract quite strong negative attention in the community. Telling these stories requires extra thoughtfulness to create understanding and deliver key messages without further endangering people who have experienced violence or exposing them to damaging comment.

47. Communication is further hampered by the fact that collection of GBV data is not consistent across justice systems, social services, health services, statistical agencies and countries, and that different actors are involved in collection who may not necessarily pursue the same objectives, nor have/use the same information at their disposal. Much of this data is also collected for operational purposes and not statistical, research and policy purposes.

48. There are also definitional challenges within and across systems and countries. The definition of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (known as the Istanbul Convention) is ‘violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately’ (including girls under the age of 18). Using this definition would provide consistency when discussing gender-based violence against women. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (1993) identified three main types of violence against women: violence in the family; in the general community; and violence perpetrated or condoned by the State; clarifying that such violence can take physical, sexual and psychological forms. Some countries with publications based on data from police crime statistics may not be able to fully implement the definitions of gender-based violence from the UN and the Istanbul Convention.

49. Barring few exceptions, the risk of gender-based violence concerns women. Nevertheless, it is important to note in communication that violence is also perpetrated against men.

[4] European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
[5] Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women, UN 2014

50. Challenges and recommendations related to communicating statistics on gender-based violence may also be relevant to communicating information on harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and human trafficking.

2. Challenges

51. Violence is a strongly gendered issue globally. Women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual, economic and psychological abuse in all societies while perpetrators of violence against both men and women are predominantly male.

52. Communicating GBV statistics is challenging because its multifaceted nature and the data itself may trigger distress for people who have experienced violence.

53. It is important to take into account factors that intersect with gender, such as age, education, race, class or minority group membership when analysing and communicating data on gender-based violence.

54. The extent to which violence against women is perpetrated by men can stigmatise men and adversely affect the reception of the communication. Smaller groups for which data is not robust enough to report can feel marginalised, for example, males who have experienced violence at the hands of women.

55. Data on GBV is not collected and disseminated in a consistent way across countries.

56. Another challenge is how levels of reporting can vary over time because of higher awareness or greater access to reporting.

57. Data on GBV includes, but is not limited to:

- Complaints received and rejected by police and other law enforcement agencies
- Cases filed with prosecution services
- Cases taken to court vs cases dropped
- Court decisions
- Civil lawsuits
- Restraining orders
- Quantitative and qualitative surveys
- Health and educational services
- Social services
- Local and community-based monitoring associated with mandated reporting and referral mechanisms.

58. A major challenge for communication is the comparability of results over time within countries and also between different countries. The unit of observation may also vary across sources (i.e., complaints, court cases, survivors, instances of violence, etc.).

3. Recommendations

59. Understand the collection of data. As far as possible, ensure data is consistent with national and international measures and that terminology used in communication is standard wherever possible. The 2014 UN Guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women will be a good starting point, as will standards developed by National Statistics Offices (NSOs). The Istanbul Convention lists activities classified as violence.

60. Be clear about the type of GBV addressed and include a definition in the communication. Where definitions are not consistent for multiple sources used in analysis, note where these differences occur.

61. Encourage surveys on GBV in individual countries. Knowledge about GBV is essential in order for it be addressed within a society.

62. When designing the collection of data, make sure that data captures the extent and the evolution of the problem and is useful for evidence-based policy making. Ask what it is that people need to know to change what they want to change, and whether it is possible to answer that question through the data. Conduct surveys at regular intervals in order to be able to make a pertinent and comparative assessment of the prevalence and the trends in all forms of violence. Disaggregate results by demographic and social characteristics when possible.

63. In analysis, clearly indicate possible changes of methodology, legislation and context that may lead to differences in prevalence – for example specific campaigns (such as #MeToo), or changes in policies e.g. training of the judiciary, or awareness raising on the part of the government and non-governmental organizations. This may lead to higher levels of reporting (both for administrative data and population surveys).

64. Be consistent and professional in communication: Ensure messages are clear and accurate to maximise influence in delivering key messages. Avoid time series or cross-country comparison of data if data are not collected in a systematic and comparable way. Use non-emotive language, and acknowledge experiences for all genders or sexes if possible and relevant. Do not sensationalise GBV data, but do not step away from it either.

65. Tailor communication to a range of users and consider multiple platforms – have detailed data available for researchers, and accessible, brief summaries available for media, social media and the community. Have access to data in a single location that is easily accessible to service providers, policy-makers, researchers and the public. Make use of infographics for social media and analytical articles.

66. Consider establishing a national steering committee or working group to oversee data collection processes, assess information priorities through dialogue between data producers and data users, and provide clear ownership over findings and outputs.

4. Examples

67. Example 1: The Council of Europe's Group of Action against violence against women and domestic violence (GREVIO) is monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention by State Parties; the reports contain ample references to statistics and their use for assessments and recommendations.

68. Example 2: Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention provides guidance for data collection and research on violence, and the Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention provides additional guidance on the implementation of Article 11 (see pages 14-15).

69. Example 3: There are growing numbers of surveys to measure GBV. The European Union Fundamental Rights Agency Survey on Violence against Women, for example, asked 42,000 women across the EU about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including incidents of intimate partner violence ('domestic violence').

70. Example 4: There is work being done in Australia to optimise communication of statistics on GBV by the media. The Australian National Media Engagement (NME) Project, run by the community organisation Our Watch is engaging media to increase quality reporting of violence against women and their children. GBV generates frequent media coverage in Australia, but some of the reporting perpetuates attitudes and myths that give rise to the violence in the first place. The NME project aims to provide people with an understanding of the links between sexism, gender stereotyping and inequality, community attitudes and violence. Our Watch and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) partnered to develop a study on 'Media Representations of Violence Against Women and their Children' to provide baseline data on how the issue is being reported.

71. Example 5: In 2017, ANROWS also ran the fourth National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS). This survey is one of the main mechanisms for measuring progress against the six National Outcomes outlined in Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. Another is the ABS Personal Safety Survey (PSS), which measures experiences of violence. One of the ways in which the PSS is aiming to improve communicating statistics on gender- based violence is avoiding using the word 'victim', referring instead to 'people that have experienced violence', which stresses the action that happened to the person, without labelling the person themselves.

72. Example 6: A useful method of communication that engages the public and also allows them to react is to tell a single story (one or two facts) with a colourful graphic or picture on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Australian examples of this can be found here. There is a danger in this for such a sensitive subject as GBV, as people can hijack the post for their own agenda. It is also not usually possible to find appropriate images for this subject, so graphs or small tables are more likely to be used.

73. Example 7: As a strategy to disseminate information on violence against women, annually on 25 November since 2003, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico publishes the informative bulletin called "Statistics on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women", which contains the most relevant data on violence committed against women and on deaths from homicide and femicide.

74. Example 8: The National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico published on 6 November 2017 the Integrated System of Statistics on Violence against Women, (SIESVIM is the acronym in Spanish). This is a website that concentrates on a consultation tool and a broad set of indicators from the main sources of information in Mexico. This makes it possible to account for the magnitude, forms and manifestations in which violence against women occurs. This website is an important benchmark which supports and sustains the definition, monitoring and evaluation of public policies aimed at eradicating violence against women, as well as complying with the observations issued by the Committee of Experts for monitoring and compliance with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

75. Example 9: In response to Istanbul Convention Article 11, Eurostat, in cooperation with National Statistical Institutes and experts from relevant organisations, has developed an EU-wide survey on gender-based violence against women and other forms of inter-personal Violence (EU-GBV). The first pilot survey results have been analysed and the final

methodology, including the questionnaire, has been finalised based on testing outcomes. The methodological guidelines include recommendations for dissemination of results. The EU-survey will be implemented at the national level from 2020 onwards. Technical as well as financial support to implement and test the survey is available for countries within the European Statistical System (ESS).

76. Example 10: The official crime figures based on records made for law enforcement, investigation, prosecution, court cases, and prison administration have been collected from countries through joint data collection by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Eurostat since 2008. Criminal acts are counted by each type of crime based on International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS). The data can be disaggregated by additional variables, for example, sex of victim and victim-perpetrator relationship.

5. References and links

- Information about the Istanbul Convention
- Ensuring data collection and research: Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention (2016), Council of Europe

C. Guidance note 3 - The language of gender in statistical communication

1. The issue

77. Increasingly, the word 'gender' can be a turn-off for some people and dissuade them from further reading on a topic, but it is important to recognize that 'gender' is a reality. Lack of clarity over the meaning of terms such as 'sex' (biological differences between males and females) and 'gender' (socially constructed roles and behaviours), and what the difference is between them, can leave an opening for the concept of 'gender' to be misrepresented and for evidence to be misused.

78. Challenges to 'gender statistics' may be received from various groups, ranging from those that are critical of gender equality to those that are promoting women's rights. Maintaining impartiality is essential in such circumstances, such as being objective when identifying what concepts need to be measured.

79. The tendency to view the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' as interchangeable can often cause confusion or, as understanding of the difference increases, prompt objections to 'gender' being confused with 'sex'. In both collecting and reporting on data, it is essential that the terminology used can be understood by respondents and users respectively. Consistent and clear guidance and definitions can help understanding.

80. It is important to use appropriate gender-sensitive language when reporting on gender statistics, for example, by using gender-neutral terms such as 'police officer' and avoiding gender-specific job titles, or using gender-neutral pronouns instead of gender-specific ones. However, a balance must be struck so that users can still understand and not be confused by what they might see as jargon. The terms gender, woman/man, female/male and feminine/masculine are imbued with meaning and it can be difficult to anticipate how the audience will interpret the associated statistics if explanations are not provided.

81. Cross-cultural and cross-language considerations are also important, especially in countries where multiple languages are used by NSOs for their communications.

82. More broadly, 'gender identity' refers to an individual's personal perception of their gender, which could be as a man, a woman, as having no gender, or as having a non-binary gender. In communicating statistics on gender identity, there is an even greater need to provide clear guidance on definitions and terminology and to use language that is inclusive, acceptable and understood.

2. Challenges

83. Misrepresentation of evidence relating to women's rights and gender equality issues makes it harder to communicate on these topics and to promote the use of robust evidence as the basis for policy. Care must be taken to be impartial and objective in reporting gender statistics and to correct any misunderstandings.

84. Given the frequent confusion about the meaning of sex and gender, it is important not to treat these as interchangeable and to use the correct terminology in reporting statistics. For example, when we refer to the 'gender pay gap' we are concerned both with pay statistics disaggregated by sex and gender norms which influence pay. This is more of a challenge in some languages where, for example, the same word may be used for both sex and gender or

there is no single word equivalent to gender. In countries where gender terminology is adapted from international standards, there may be multiple translations of the same term.

85. The use of gender-sensitive language is crucial, especially when communicating on gender equality-related policies, and challenges in this area vary greatly between languages. Changes in vocabulary and debates on this topic are taking place in various countries, for example in Spain and France.

86. If gender-specific terms are used in reporting statistics, the data may be seen as relating only to women or men, for example air hostess or fireman. In order to be inclusive, appropriate gender-neutral language should be used unless reporting on data that refer only to men or to women and not to both. A balance needs to be struck between inclusiveness and making women or men visible by using gender-sensitive language. The terms to use should be informed by what is understood and acceptable within the country, language and culture as long as these do not imply either the exclusion of either women or men or the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

87. Where data are collected on a wider range of gender identities, these should be reported sensitively and in a balanced way. The language used should reflect all groups represented in the data and be presented in a way that can be understood by the general population.

3. Recommendations

88. Present gender statistics in an impartial and objective manner, correct misunderstandings and misrepresentation and work with the media to encourage accurate and balanced reporting.

89. Be careful not to confuse the terms 'sex' and 'gender'. Identify the appropriate concepts when collecting data and use the appropriate words when reporting statistics. Be clear about what definitions have been used in the data collection and report accordingly.

90. Produce and make available clear definitions of terminology relating to 'sex', 'gender' and, if appropriate, 'gender identity'. Include matching definitions in each language used and standardise translation of key terms into national languages. More detailed descriptions may be needed in countries whose languages do not have specific terms for sex and gender. Take note of internationally-agreed definitions, such as the Council of Europe definition of 'gender'.

91. Test understanding and use of different words within the general population and/or the target audience(s), for example by using cognitive testing, pilot surveys and/or focus groups. Ensure that this includes representatives of groups from different cultures and/or speaking different languages, including all groups that will be represented in the results.

92. Use gender-sensitive terms where possible, or include words relating to both women and men where such terms are not available. Avoid gender-specific pronouns if possible. Consult relevant guides on gender-sensitive communication produced by specialist gender equality bodies and follow their guidance where appropriate. Aim to be inclusive while using clear and accessible language, making sure not to overcomplicate the reporting.

93. New concepts and terminology related to gender emerge on an ongoing basis. Given the transformational and evolving nature of gender diversity, definitions and standards around language should be reviewed frequently.

4. Examples

94. Example 1: To address the issue that 'sex' and 'gender' have for many years been used interchangeably, the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS) published an article on 21 February 2019 explaining the difference between the two terms and why it is important to understand the difference. It then goes on to discuss why they are important concepts for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the 'leave no one behind principle'. The article also discusses other concepts: gender identity, variations in sex characteristics and transgender.

95. Example 2: The World Health Organisation provides a glossary of terms which includes definitions of sex, gender and other phrases including the word 'gender'.

96. Example 3: Collecting data and reporting on these topics in an inclusive way introduces challenges, since they can be sensitive topics which are not understood by everyone and the amount of data collected will be small. ONS is researching how best to collect data on gender identity and has recommended that a voluntary question on gender identity for those aged 16 and over is included in the 2021 Census for England and Wales.

97. Example 4: Various bodies have published advice on gender-sensitive communication. For example, the French Haut Conseil de l'Egalité has developed a practical guide for communication professionals and policymakers. This presents ten recommendations for avoiding gender stereotypes in public communication using concrete examples. The 2016 edition can be found here.

98. Example 5: Guidance on using gender-inclusive language in correspondence in either English or French has been published by the Government of Canada's Translation Bureau. This provides advice on avoiding references to gender in letters or emails and is recommended when writing to: individuals whose gender is unknown, non-binary individuals or diverse groups.

D. Guidance note 4 - Maintaining impartiality when communicating gender statistics

1. The issue

99. An NSO should focus on creating storylines which increase awareness and understanding, while maintaining impartiality. There is a fine line between policy relevance, a task of the NSO, and advocacy, which is not in the remit of the NSO. The first principle of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics focuses on impartiality, which of course is not unique to gender statistics, but there are special considerations for the case of gender. For some topics, such as violence, value judgments will inevitably be made by other people. In other topics, those producing and communicating the statistics may have strong personal views on their policy implications.

100. Gender issues occupy a unique place in policymaking which necessitates extra care for NSOs, as they are obliged to remain impartial while balancing this with the obligation to produce relevant data that informs policymaking and answers the needs of those who require the data. The choices that a statistician makes about what data to present reflects their underlying views about what is important.

2. Challenges

101. The first challenge when maintaining impartiality is to choose the best data source for a particular topic. Sometimes it is possible to choose more than one source and describe the phenomenon from various viewpoints, which could be of interest to researchers, policy makers and decision makers.

102. Secondly, how the data is analysed and presented are crucial. Gender Statistics need to be put into context so that an audience can understand them. It is straightforward for an NSO to provide some limited text around figures that it produces. However, it can be much more challenging for NSOs to deeply analyse a phenomenon.

103. It can also be difficult to show gender differentials, for example, to users not familiar with statistics.

104. Objectivity is essential when presenting the data. Getting a message across to audiences with strong attitudes and prejudices about gender issues and strong views about gender roles presents additional challenges. For example, there may be a reluctance to accept certain findings, or the importance of statistics on some topics may be questioned. Gender statistics are thus faced with a need to communicate not only about statistics themselves but also about their value.

105. We need to take a balanced view of the impact on all sexes and genders in producing, analysing and presenting gender statistics. A resistance to analysis of some topics by sex is a challenge. We must not discriminate against a particular group of people by focusing only on one group (women for example) and if possible and relevant, we need to look at all sexes and genders (women, men, other).

106. Because gender differences often vary according to other characteristics, it is important to take into account factors that intersect with gender, such as age, education, family situation, place of residence or minority group membership.

107. Methodologies can influence responses differently for women and men, for example having the husband present during their wife's interview.

108. Missing data should be clearly footnoted, figures should be rounded appropriately, and the same scales used in charts to avoid presenting data inaccurately and in a misleading way.

109. Gender equality is manifested through language. Women, men and those not fitting into the binary gender system therefore need to be addressed with language which uses dignity and respect. For more reading on this topic see the Guidance note 3: The language of gender in statistical communication.

3. Recommendations

110. Be transparent and explain why data or indicators are chosen and also describe their limitations. The correct interpretation relies on choosing the right indicators and measures in data analysis and presentation.

111. Present data for both women and men to allow comparison and show the impact for both. If possible and relevant, take gender diversity into account.

112. Be objective and avoid stereotypical assumptions about gender roles in analysing and reporting gender statistics.

113. Let users know the number of respondents behind an indicator. To facilitate the correct interpretation of data, ensure that you provide the demographic data which sets the context, such as the number of women and men, their age structure, geographic breakdown and so on.

114. Remember to include an intersectional aspect, if appropriate, for example the employment of immigrant women compared to the employment of non-immigrant women. Where feasible, consider the range of other questions included in data collection instruments and the possible statistical outputs when these are combined with gender.

115. It should be made clear where the data collection methodology could bias responses, for example if a husband is present at wife's interview in surveys concerning violence against women. Be aware of how the data is collected, how the questions have been asked and if answers can be affected.

116. Be aware of gender-sensitive language when communicating gender statistics through stories, data, or infographics. Avoid using language which refers to only one gender (either implicitly or explicitly), and use gender-sensitive and inclusive language (see the Guidance note 3: The language of gender in statistical communication).

4. Examples

117. Example 1: Segregation and the gender pay gap (GPG) are interlinked. For example, occupations are strongly segregated by sex and this can also be seen in GPG, where wages are lower in female dominated occupations (like nurses and teachers). Look at things from different angles and with different data.

118. Example 2: When presenting data on people in leadership, show the numbers and shares of women and men in these positions. It may be useful to indicate where quota systems are in place but do not take a stand on whether or not there should be quotas. Be objective and impartial.

119. Example 3: Present data on the numbers both of women and men who avail of parental leave. Describe the consequences of parental leave for both women and men. Long parental leaves can have negative consequences for the earnings and career path of women. Men who take parental leave can benefit by sharing parental responsibility and developing closer relationships with their children. There are many assumptions around the impact of parental leave on women and men. Present data for both women and men to allow comparison and show the impact for both.

120. Example 4: In the Finnish Gender Equality Barometer 2017, the interview form was amended to allow respondents to choose from the options of male, female, other, don't know and prefer not to say. The questions on harassment were also revised to allow respondents to report the gender of their harasser as male, female or other. In previous barometers, respondents were not asked to state their gender and it was instead determined on the basis of recorded data, resulting in binarism. It is important to tell users that we understand the diversity of genders even when it is not possible to show the diversity in statistics because of the low numbers in a survey or because register-based data covers judicial sexes only (usually male/female).

5. References and links

- Developing Gender Statistics: A Practical Tool, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe & World Bank Institute. Geneva 2010.

- EIGE Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus
- Engendering Statistics. A tool for Change, Birgitta Hedman, Francesca Perucci & Pehr Sundström. 1996. Statistics Sweden.
- Handbook to Address Violence against Women in and through the Media, UN Women.
- Toolkit on Gender-sensitive Communication. European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- Guidance note 3: The language of gender in statistical communication

E. Guidance note 5 - Interacting with users of gender statistics

1. The issue

121. Because there are many different users of gender statistics (policymakers, researchers, journalists, representatives of nongovernmental organizations, general public), with a wide range of needs and agendas as well as capacity to interpret statistics, distinct communication strategies must be developed to target each user group individually. If care is taken to communicate effectively in a manner that reaches each user group, it is more likely that gender statistics will reach a wider audience. This requires using and adapting different communication channels and tools, including making judicious and well-informed use of new media, social networks, visualizations and interactive tools to engage audience groups who are less attracted to or less able to understand more traditional dissemination products and channels. These actions would also help to ensure users know what data are already available and the ways in which they can be used to answer policy-relevant questions. In particular, there is often a gap between gender-related data producers and policymaking users. Discussion needs to be carried out continuously and systematically to connect these communities, so that the most useful data is produced at the right time to fit in with policymaking needs.

122. With specific reference to gender statistics, this guidance note will help you to identify:

- Key user groups
- The different media and channels available to convey your insights from the data
- The role of text, charts, images and their presentation and accessibility
- Contextual issues that may distort understanding

123. Finally, some recommendations will be made to improve approaches to anticipating the needs of users and effectively interacting with policy-making cycles, encouraging NSOs and other statistical producers to innovate and experiment, benefiting from the learnings of practical case studies.

2. Challenges

124. Gender statistics is unique as it requires an approach to data production and use which describes the living conditions of all genders, highlighting differences, analysing gaps and describing the different roles played in households, and society more generally. This wide remit represents a core challenge for gender data producers given the variety and number of potential

users who may be engaged on various topics, and the number of policy areas where the data may have implications. Moreover, bridging the producer-user divide requires a translation from technical language to language which is more suitable for each intended audience. This is a particular skill and can be time consuming. It is also important to remind users of gender statistics of factors that can intersect with gender, such as age, education, race, class or minority group membership. Finally, operating in a policy environment which does not have a culture of data-driven decision-making, or that is not sensitive to gender issues more generally, can present a particular challenge for gender data producers.

3. Recommendations

A. Contents:

125. Do not disaggregate data simply by sex. Analyse issues or concerns determined by gender-based and/or sex-based differences, inequalities and similarities between women and men.

126. Focus on areas of concern where women and men may not enjoy the same opportunities or status or where the lives of women and men may be affected in different ways.

127. Take into account specific population groups where gender inequality is likely to be present or more pronounced.

128. Do not forget to put gender stereotypes and gender bias in evidence when relevant for the topic you are dealing with.

129. Where lower response rates (due to the sensitivity of the topic) affect the data quality, flag this for users.

B. Designing:

130. Representing information in a visual way, with respect to describing them simply, impacts on the clarity and speed with which information is received. Create data visualization and infographics to increase the appeal, comprehension, and retention of your data. Avoid using images and colours that reinforce gender stereotypes.

131. People prefer quick and easy ways to grasp information, irrespective of whether they would like to retain it in memory or not. Videos help address the issue of shrinking attention span.

132. Ensure the user-friendliness of databases and tabulators produced for gender statistics.

C. Type of media:

133. Different users need different means of communication. Students and young people in general are attracted by social media (twitter, FB, etc.). Journalists, policy makers, academia and researchers are strong users of traditional publication, press releases, data-bases on websites. Non-expert users are more confident with video and storytelling.

134. Publish data in an open and re-usable format for users.

4. Examples

135. Example 1: Video: '[What are you going to do about your statistics?]' The video draws attention to the importance of statistics to analyse gender differences in living conditions. In

this case, it is a woman who has a paradoxically stereotyped perception of the status of women on the basis of her own life experience.

136. Example 2: Story telling: women's human rights storytelling. The document presents some compassionate stories collected by a collaborative storytelling laboratory. They contain compelling, qualitative evidence of the long and winding journey of social change required for gender justice on the ground.

137. Example 3: Press release: 'Progress on gender equality far too slow'. A good example of agile communication of statistical results on areas of concern where women and men do not enjoy the same opportunities/status or where women's and men's lives are affected in different ways is provided in this OECD press release.

138. Example 4: Social media (Twitter and Facebook). A good example by UNECE of how even a message of great importance can be effectively conveyed in a few lines and by the right image.

139. Example 5: The EIGE infographic presents some data concerning online violence. Representing information visually increase the appeal, the comprehension, and the retention of the data.

5. References and links

- Guidance note 3: The language of gender in statistical communication

F. Guidance note 6 - Addressing gaps in gender statistics

1. The issue

140. Many countries have data gaps in their production of sex-disaggregated and gender-relevant statistics. Such gaps are currently being highlighted by various stock-taking exercises related to data availability for SDG indicators, for example, or become highlighted as new issues become prominent on national and international agendas. Particularly striking and persistent gaps across the UNECE region concern time-use surveys and gender-based violence. There are also other gaps in emerging issue areas such as household decision-making and the environment.

141. Addressing data gaps is more than a technical issue. This requires a process of prioritization, collaboration between key stakeholders from the data producer, user, and financing communities, and putting in place a feedback loop to ensure that new data produced meets user demand or helps to broaden policy horizons. Technical assistance from other countries, or regional or international bodies can be particularly helpful in highlighting specific data gaps as well as providing guidance on how to address these gaps. As gender statistics is a field which cuts across many issue areas, addressing data gaps can require effort across sectoral boundaries leading to challenges due to lack of comparability or harmonization. Gaps can occur in 4 ways:

- Absolute gaps, i.e. no data whatsoever is produced
- The frequency with which data is produced

- The possibility to perform multiple disaggregations i.e. to disaggregate by sex as well as other characteristics such as income status or location, and
- Data may be produced which does not adhere to international standards which damages cross country comparability and raises issues of quality

2. Challenges

142. Relevant data are required to demonstrate the importance of social or economic issues. In the absence of such data, it is difficult to make the case for advocating for addressing data gaps. In these circumstances, analysts can be advised to draw on data collected by academics, other NSOs, and/or not-for-profit organizations.

143. Implementing international standards is not always possible as they require considerable financial and human resources.

144. International standards can be non-existent for emerging issues.

145. Convening multiple stakeholder groups is challenging but necessary to ensure data gaps are prioritized and user demand is met.

146. Decision makers in NSOs may not be convinced of the importance of producing gender statistics and may need to be convinced of their value by case studies.

147. Laws and policies do not always lead to data generation.

148. Constrained financing is also challenging as additional data production often incurs additional cost.

149. Low capacity within NSOs to do secondary analysis of data to produce gender relevant insights.

150. Sample sizes for household surveys may not be large enough to allow cross classification of sex by other variables.

151. Poor quality administrative data can constrain the ability to fill data gaps.

152. Frequency - Data for gender statistics are often produced in one-time period.

153. There can be a lack of awareness around other factors that can intersect with gender, such as age, education, race, class or minority group membership.

3. Recommendations

154. Be transparent about data gaps.

155. Use international and regional standards and guidelines on data collection, as they offer a significant opportunity to address gender data gap, particularly when accompanied by capacity building and financing.

156. Use the processes to agree on National Statistical Strategies as a strategic opportunity to ensure that gaps in gender statistics are addressed, and new partnerships are formed around gender statistics.

157. Leverage the suite of data collection options available and create linkages between them to address data gaps, rather than focusing on one data collection instrument.

158. Convene stakeholder groups and find champions both within and outside of government. Other government departments are key users of data produced and produce administrative records. Other actors such as civil society, the private sector, and academia are also important actors as data producers and consumers. These are important stakeholders to engage in order to demonstrate and drive the demand for gender statistics, understand exactly what data is required by users, and provide justification for budgetary allocation.

159. When working with various data producers within a country, NSOs should direct their efforts to ensure the coherence of the actions, and to avoid the dissemination of conflicting data.

160. For expensive surveys, finding sponsors might be the only way to get a survey done and fill in the gaps. This can be very useful as the sponsors may have their own interests in the data which may offer new gender relevant information.

4. Examples

A. Joint Data Group, Albania

161. No mechanism of collaboration and dialogue previously existed in Albania between the users and producers of gender statistics such as academia or NSO. However, since 2018, INSTAT and UN agencies have established a Joint Data Group focused on the preparation of a New National Statistical Programme 2017-2021 and on the joint advocacy activities around data collection, with a specific focus on SDGs.

162. The group includes a coordination/info sharing function (making sure UN data experts from different agencies, as well as INSTAT itself, are aware of the full range of UN support through line Ministries) as well as a support function.

163. The Joint Data Group facilitates substantive discussions among UN agencies and INSTAT for improving data collection, analysis and sharing, and capacity building. The last meeting of the Joint Data Group was on the capacity of the Albanian statistical system to produce data for the monitoring of SDGs at national level.

B. Gender Statistics Technical Committee, INEGI - Mexico

164. Mexico's NSO has a Gender Statistics Technical Committee since 2010 under the National Statistical and Geographical System, which is presided by INMUJERES – the Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women- which includes the direct participation of several ministries from the executive branch (Education, Labour, of the Interior, Health) but also the judiciary branch, the National Human Rights Commission and the local office of UN Women. This Committee among other tasks is in charge of identifying the data needs relevant for the gender policies, they integrate the key gender indicators for SDGs and other relevant initiatives and had worked in the conceptual design of different surveys, such as the Time Use questions, the violence survey, etc. The program has worked for 6 years, with a set of activities defined each year.

C. Use of international and regional standards and capacity building opportunities

165. The Minimum Set of Gender Indicators, SDGs, as well as standards from Eurostat and ILO on specific surveys have driven the filling of data gaps at country level. Regional programmes supporting the roll out of data collection on a multi-country basis also helps to yield high quality, comparable data, as well as build capacity and encourage adoption in regular

production. This has been the approach, for example, to surveys on women's well-being financed by OSCE.

D. Addressing gaps in gender statistics when preparing National Statistical Strategies, various countries

166. In Albania, the National Programme on Statistics 2017-2021 was supported by technical expertise from UN Women and UNICEF. Bosnia and Herzegovina also see their Statistics Roadmap process as an opportunity to improve gender data production. In Turkey, the Women's Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan (covering the years 2018 and 2023) is prepared by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services. The availability of gender-based disaggregated data is one of the cross-cutting policy areas in all the objectives and activities of this Action Plan. Particular attention has been given to the production of comparative data in achieving the objectives of this Action Plan.

E. Linking different data collection options to address data gaps, Turkey

167. In Turkey, available data sources include the annual Life Satisfaction Survey, decennial Time Use Surveys, the Family Structure Survey (5-year cycle), and decennial survey on Domestic Violence Against Women. Layering information from census and strengthened administrative data would help to enable multiple disaggregations and circumvent the issue of small sample size.

F. Convening and engaging stakeholder groups within and outside of government, various countries

168. The NSO of Bosnia and Herzegovina is working together with the Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina to measure the composite Gender Equality Index. Gender data collection efforts performed by TurkStat have been in cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services for calculating Gender Equality Index at the national level for Turkey since 2016 by taking reference of The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) studies. Finding champions for gender statistics can also be effective to draw attention to gaps. INSTAT Albania and The Prime Minister's Office for example have prioritized at national and local level the production and monitoring of gender-related SDG indicators.

5. References and links

- Social Structure and Gender Statistics, Turkish Statistical Institute
- Turkish Statistical Institute database
- Women and men in Bosnia and Herzegovina

III. Annex

Mock-up of the Guidance Note Template