
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Gender Statistics

Online, 28-29 September 2021

Report of the Meeting

I. Attendance

The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries and organizations: Argentina; Australia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Brazil; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Egypt; Finland; Georgia; Germany; Iceland; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Latvia; Lithuania; Monaco; Montenegro; Morocco; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Moldova; Serbia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine; United Kingdom; United States of America; Uzbekistan; Vietnam; European Central Bank; Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat); European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE); Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); PARIS21; Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD); and Women's Issues Information Centre (Lithuania).

II. Organization of the meeting

1. Andrew Nash of the United Kingdom chaired the meeting.
2. The following substantive topics were discussed during the meeting:
 - (a) Communicating gender statistics
 - (b) Gender and trade
 - (c) Measuring violence against women in times of crisis
 - (d) Covid-19 and gender statistics
 - (e) Regional networking platform
 - (f) Emerging topics and data gaps
 - (g) Future work
3. Discussions were led by Ainur Dossanova, Kazakhstan; Anu Peltola, UNCTAD; Susana Neves, Portugal; Pierre Turcotte, Canada; and Carolina Nordström, Sweden.

4. Documents and slides presented at the meeting are available on [the meeting web page](#).
5. The meeting was supported financially from the project “Data and statistics for more gender-responsive trade policies in Africa, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia” of the United Nations Development Account (12th tranche).

III. Summary of the main issues discussed in the substantive sessions

A. Communicating gender statistics

6. Presentations in this session demonstrated recent progress in communicating gender statistics through the creation of dedicated web portals, open data initiatives and data storytelling. Belarus presented its Gender Statistics Web Portal which disseminates statistical indicators on gender equality. The portal allows for customized data visualizations and is optimized for use on mobile phones and tablets, meeting the needs of a wide variety of data users including policymakers, scientific researchers, and media. Switzerland shared outcomes of a recent dialogue with data users which included the identification of data gaps and desired data-access features from the data users’ perspective in the context of open access to government data. Extra-family childcare, the gender pension gap, and gender health were among the topics identified by data users as lacking gender data. A presentation from the Swiss National Science Foundation described the use of data stories to communicate data-driven findings on the gender publication gap in an easily understandable way.

7. The presentation from Belarus generated discussion about the selection of indicators for national dissemination among those defined in the global and regional sets of gender indicators. The findings presented by the Swiss National Science foundation prompted discussion of the reasons for reduced research grant applications from women during the pandemic and evidence-based approaches to promoting gender equality. Presenters were also asked about the extent to which access and use of their dissemination platforms and tools is monitored, as well as the degree of media outreach and uptake. Email enquiries, social media interaction and invitations to give talks are all indicative of successful communication. Knowing the characteristics rather than only the volume of users is clearly advantageous to assess the success of communication efforts, but it is more challenging to ascertain.

8. Discussion during the session highlighted the importance of close dialogue with data users; communicating gender data must take into account the needs of data users to ensure statistics are relevant and useful. The emerging role of storytelling in statistics to reach a wide audience was also discussed. Ease of access, ease of use and interpretation, and effective harnessing of modern digital technologies are all key aspects of good communication. Another conclusion of the session was that the dissemination and communication of gender statistics should not be an afterthought but should be considered from the outset of data collection design.

B. Gender and trade

9. In this session, results of a study on gender-in-trade statistical indicators in Georgia were presented. The study is part of a joint project of UNCTAD, UNECE and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa on developing and using statistics for more gender-responsive trade policy. The results of the study demonstrated how existing data sources can be used for the analysis of gender equality in international trade and to respond to the emerging policy demand for statistics on gender-in-trade. The study indicated that microdata linking provides more precise indicators than the traditional analysis of export-intensive sectors by connecting trading businesses to their managers, owners and employees. The microdata linking approach used in Georgia could be adopted by other national statistical offices working to compile similar gender-in-trade indicators.

10. Discussion in the session highlighted the increasing demand for information that crosses traditional statistical domains and requires data linking and the importance of interagency cooperation for accessing the relevant data.

C. Measuring violence against women in times of crisis

11. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increase in violence against women (VAW) in many countries and growing demand for data and statistics in this area. Presentations in this session shared experiences using innovative tools, following proper safety standards in surveys, and combining data from surveys and administrative sources to meet the growing demand for data on VAW during the Covid-19 pandemic.

12. The session included a presentation on a decision tree developed by UNFPA, the World Health Organization, and UN Women that guides data collectors in identifying the appropriate methodologies and data sources for data on VAW without jeopardizing participants' safety or data integrity. UN Women also presented on innovations and safety protocols introduced to surveys on VAW during the pandemic such as mobile-phone friendly surveys, the use of vignettes and more yes/no questions, and safe words. Finland and Italy shared experiences of collecting and producing comprehensive data on VAW through surveys, administrative sources, and service-based data. Many of the new methods and innovations reported will be incorporated into regular statistical production on VAW.

13. The presentations and discussion highlighted the importance of protecting the privacy and safety of respondents. Special protocols and careful testing are particularly important in the pandemic context, and the value of data collected needs to be weighed against the potential risk for respondents. Because gender-based violent crimes are under reported to the police, combining administrative data with data collected in surveys of service-providers and victims greatly improves evidence on VAW. The session generated questions around the inclusion of males in victimization surveys, the ethical responsibility to follow-up with respondents reporting victimization, and qualitative studies to contextualize statistical data. Experts also acknowledged the need to take advantage of the increased attention and resources for data on VAW to sustain the production of VAW statistics in the long term.

D. Covid-19 and gender statistics

14. Several countries presented good examples of measuring the differential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men. Finland presented a large-scale research project on the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on gender equality. The project is a collaboration between data producers, various government agencies, and academic researchers and relies on data from a variety of sources to provide information for policymakers to help minimize the impact of the pandemic on gender equality. Colombia presented results on subjective wellbeing among women and men during the pandemic from its new Social Pulse Survey as well as Time Use Survey data collected during the crisis. Data from both sources show a disproportionate impact on women, with women taking on more unpaid work than men and more women than men reporting feeling overloaded with household work. A presentation from the Republic of Moldova showed how the labour force participation of women and men has changed throughout the course of the pandemic. The Republic of Moldova also reported on increases in use of gender statistics during the pandemic period.

15. UNECE presented new guidance prepared by the Conference of European Statisticians Steering Group on Gender Statistics on measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men. The guidance provides practical support for countries to produce data on the gendered impact of the crisis on work—paid and unpaid—health, violence against women, and the gender digital divide. The guidance proposes indicators and survey questions and offers advice on the key methodological considerations for data collection and dissemination. The country presentations in the session related to the topics addressed in the guidance, pointing to its relevance and potential to generate comparable data on the gendered impact of the pandemic in the region.

16. Discussion and questions to presenters highlighted the value of collaboration between NSO and other key stakeholders and the use of a variety of data sources for assessing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The time series analyses presented by the Republic of Moldova and Colombia show that the impact of the pandemic is not linear and that assessing the ongoing and longer-term impacts will be crucial. The guidance developed by the Steering Group will support this objective.

E. Regional networking platform

17. Experience is accumulating in the region on the measurement of gender identity in surveys and censuses. During this session, UNECE announced the launch of the [Repository and Networking Platform on Gender Identity](#) which consolidates experiences from 34 countries in measuring gender identity. The platform provides information on the legal context, terminology, development and testing of questions, statistical standards, and data dissemination related to the measurement of gender identity across countries in the region. The resource may be consulted by those countries that are interested in the topic and wish to begin work in this area.

18. One such country experience was presented by the United States, which added questions on sexual orientation and gender identity to recent phases of its Covid-era Household Pulse Survey. The survey uses the “two-step” approach, asking separate questions about sex at birth and self-described gender. Methodological research based on this survey and other instruments in the United States indicates that these questions are not difficult for respondents and do not lead of survey breakoffs. While the survey results do not provide prevalence estimates of gender minority populations, they do provide an important demographic variable for the analysis of living conditions and policy impacts. Participants asked questions about response options used in the United States, including the possibility of selecting multiple options (e.g. both ‘male’ and ‘transgender’) and frequency of the ‘none of these’ option.

19. Recent work in this area in other countries was shared in the discussion, including New Zealand’s new statistical standard for gender identity and Canada’s experience of using both a sex at birth question and a gender identity question in the 2021 census.

20. Technical questions posed to presenters pointed to ongoing methodological work in this area and highlighted common challenges national statistical offices face in measuring gender identity. Data collection around gender identity must consider respondent privacy and confidentiality, especially when whole-household surveys are used, differences in attitudes across age groups and other socio-demographic groups, and the representativeness of survey samples.

21. Conclusions of the session included: assessing prevalence is often the least pressing among reasons for measuring gender identity; measuring gender identity may impact upon gender statistics in a variety of ways; and more research is needed in areas such as cognitive testing, development of interviewing protocols and methods for proxy reporting, establishment of minimum age thresholds, and development of classifications for collecting and reporting data. Information-sharing in this area through the networking platform and other media will be crucial as countries continue to test methods and develop standards and best-practices.

F. Emerging topics and data gaps

22. Despite growing recognition of the importance of the gender dimension in statistical collection, production and communication, there are domains of official statistics that have yet to incorporate a gender perspective. These include newly-observed phenomena that lack established methodologies and the measurement of longer-standing topics that still overlook gender issues. In this session, Colombia, OECD and EIGE shared approaches to the measurement of emerging topics in gender statistics.

23. Colombia presented recent work on measuring poverty with a gender approach, including measures of subjective wellbeing, a female poverty index and survey results on access to menstrual hygiene products. Survey results presented highlighted the importance of disaggregation to identify intersecting disadvantages. OECD shared a new text analysis methodology that has revealed low usage of gender statistics in national development policy documents across the globe pointing to a gap between the production of gender statistics and their use to inform policies and programmes. EIGE reported on new data collection related to decision-making on Covid-19 health policy and in the domains of environment, climate change, energy and transport.

24. The initiatives presented in the session serve as valuable examples of moving beyond sex disaggregation to gender statistics as the measurement of issues that are relevant to gender equality. These innovative approaches and new topics—some triggered or accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic—have the potential to expand the field of gender statistics and spur new methodological work.

G. Future work

25. In this session the secretariat provided an overview of the methodological work in gender statistics completed during 2021 under the Conference of European Statistics and the future work associated with these projects which includes review and testing of survey questions on measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men (see paragraph 16) and periodic updates to the networking platform on measuring gender identity (see paragraph 18).

26. Discussion on future methodological work brought up topics such as the measurement gender and climate change, use of administrative and non-traditional sources for measuring gender issues, and the effect of the pandemic on cultural participation of women and men. The Conference of European Statisticians Steering Group on Gender Statistics will consider developing concrete proposals for further work in these areas.

27. The next meeting of the Group of Experts on Gender Statistics with physical presence is planned for the first half of 2023. An online meeting of the Group could be held in 2022.