



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

**Expert Group Meeting on the Regional Report for the African Gender and
Development Index**

**9-10 October 2017
United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Aide Memoire

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I. Background and justification

A. Importance of gender statistics

1. Gender statistics cuts across the traditional fields of statistics to identify, collect, compile, analyze, present, and disseminate statistics that reflect the problems, issues and questions related to the lives of men and women in society, and policy issues relating to genderⁱ. The disaggregation of data by sex is an important element in the production, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics. However, gender statistics should go beyond data disaggregated by sex. In addition to sex-disaggregated data, the compilation, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics should:
 - a) Reflect gender issues;
 - b) Based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives; and
 - c) Take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender bias in the dataⁱⁱ.
2. Advocates for increased gender equality and the advancement of women recommend a gender-focus in statistics that recognize that, because of cultural and social factors, men and women have different roles in society, differential access to and control over resources, and different skills and interestⁱⁱⁱ. Without such an approach the planning and implementation of policies, programmes and projects will not adequately take account of the different status of men and women. Gender statistics are also required to monitor and evaluate policies, programmes and projects, and to provide the evidence base for research.

B. Mandates

3. The quest for gender equality and the empowerment of women is enshrined in international and regional declarations, commitments and development frameworks to which a majority of African countries are signatories. At the international level, these include the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing of 1995, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda of 2015, which articulated seventeen Sustainable development goals (SDGs) with associated targets that have to be met by 2030. Regional initiatives including the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its gender component and the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality of 2004 have also provided mandates for fostering greater gender equality. In addition, many national governments have promulgated legislative and regulatory frameworks, and implemented policies and programmes aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.
4. BPfA marked an important step in the development of gender-disaggregated data and statistics. Under strategic objective H.3 (“generate and disseminate gender disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation”), it called for national, regional and international statistical services and relevant governmental and United Nations agencies to “ensure that statistics related to individuals are collected, compiled, analysed and presented by sex and age and reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society”^{iv}. It also called on Governments to “use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects”^v, and on the United

Nations to “promote the further development of statistical methods to improve data that relate to women in economic, social, cultural and political development”^{vi}.

5. The Sustainable Development Agenda has a standalone goal – Sustainable Development Goal 5 (to *achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*) – which highlights the importance of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through the adoption and strengthening of sound policies and enforceable legislation. Such policies and legislation seek to address key priorities for gender equality and women’s empowerment including in relation to discrimination, violence against all women and girls, harmful practices, unpaid care and domestic work, participation in decision making, opportunities for leadership, access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, rights to economic resources and technology. In addition to the standalone goal 5, gender perspectives and special indicators for women have also been woven into many of the other SDGs in particular those related to poverty alleviation, maternal health, educational attainment, water and sanitation, and employment. This will encourage countries to look at sex-and gender-disaggregated data for all the issues tackled by the SDG framework.

C. ECA’s response to mandates

6. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has a dedicated programme supporting member States on gender equality and the empowerment of women currently being operated by the African Centre for Gender (ACG). Following the restructuring of ECA starting in 2012, ACG developed the Continent-Wide Initiative for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (CWIGWE) which provides a strategic focus for its programme of work. The initiative was endorsed by the seventh Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Abuja, Nigeria in 2016. It addresses three interlinked pillars around which the work of ACG is organized, namely economic empowerment; women’s human rights; and the social sector.
7. ACG’s programmes and development of knowledge products have repeatedly underlined the value and importance of the collection and use of gender responsive statistics to effectively inform policy priorities. One of the main strategies for the implementation of the CWIGWE is the production of accurate gender statistics along with policy research to inform policies and programmes, including the consolidation of the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI). The AGDI was developed by ECA in response to the Beijing Plus Ten Review in 2004 when a large number of African countries reporting on the status of the implementation of BPfA indicated a lack of adequate data to reflect achievements in gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as gaps where these exist.

II. African Gender and Development Index

8. The AGDI was introduced by ECA in 2004 with the aim of supporting member States to measure the gap in the status of African men and women and to assess progress made by Governments of African countries in implementing policies aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It was endorsed by ministers responsible for gender equality and women’s affairs during the seventh African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing Plus Ten Review) held in Addis Ababa in October 2004.
9. The specific objectives of AGDI are to:

- (a) Provide African governments with data and information on the status of gender equality and the effects of their gender policies in reducing women's marginalization;
 - (b) Democratize statistics and provide gender planners and development practitioners with a monitoring tool that is effective, valid, reliable and easy to use;
 - (c) Equip policy-makers and their partners with a tool to integrate gender into national planning and policy making processes and to measure gender equality and promote women's right and advancement of women in economic, political, social spheres; and
 - (d) Strengthen the capacity of member States to monitor progress made in implementing international and regional commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.
10. The expectation is that at the end of the AGDI process, there will be:
- (a) Enhanced capacity of researchers and statisticians in AGDI countries to generate and use reliable and nationally validated gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data;
 - (b) Enhanced capacity of national gender machineries in in AGDI countries to address challenges of measuring their performance towards fulfilling their international and regional commitments; and
 - (c) Availability of data on gender equality to be used by the ECA's Sub-regional offices to produce country profiles.
11. The AGDI consists of two parts: the Gender Status Index (GSI) and the African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS). The GSI covers the aspects of gender relations that can be measured quantitatively, while the AWPS captures qualitative issues in relation to the performance of gender policies of African Governments on implementing regional and international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment. The *African Gender and Development Index Technical Note* provides a detailed description of the AGDI.
12. The AGDI was piloted in twelve countries, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda. During phase 2, it was extended to an additional fourteen countries namely; Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Congo (Republic), Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Senegal, Togo and Zambia. AGDI 3 was implemented in Guinea, Liberia, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Swaziland, while AGDI 4 was implemented in Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Mauritius and Sao Tome and Principe. This brings a total of thirty-nine countries to have undertaken the national AGDI studies, with South Africa undertaking the process twice.

III. Validation of the Regional Report of the African Gender and Development Index

13. The African Centre for Gender of ECA will be organizing an expert group meeting on 9-10 October 2017. The meeting will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

A. Objective, expected outcomes and outputs

14. The main objective of the meeting is to review draft *Regional Report of the African Gender and Development* prepared by the ECA Secretariat based on the main findings in the national AGDI reports.
15. The expected outcome from the meeting is to provide clear recommendations to guide the ECA Secretariat in revising and finalizing the *Regional Report of the African Gender and Development*.
16. Two major outputs will emanate from the meeting:
 - (a) A report of the meeting; and
 - (b) Comments and inputs provided for the revision and finalization of the *Regional Report of the African Gender and Development*.

B. Beneficiaries and Expected Impact

17. Ultimately, the main beneficiaries of this activity will be ECA member States which will have improved data and information for policy planning, control and decision-making. Through the final report, the national AGDI reports, and the meeting, gender practitioners and policy makers will be better able to understand the key gender issues faced by countries covered by the report. Consequently, ECA and other regional and international organizations will have a better understanding of the needs of member States in the area of gender will be in a better position to craft more effective programmes to assist African countries. In addition, statisticians will be in a better position to institutionalise the collection, analysis, management and dissemination of gender statistics within national statistical systems.

C. Output Indicators for Monitoring

18. The output indicators for this activity are:
 - (a) A final *Regional Report of the African Gender and Development* is prepared;
 - (b) An expert group meeting is organized and the level of satisfaction of participants is measured;
 - (c) Number of countries that prepare gender statistics publications after the meeting is organized; and
 - (d) The extent to which countries implement the recommendations presented in the report.

D. Participants and Organization of Work

19. The meeting will bring together around 40-45 participants. AGDI countries will be represented by the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Gender (or her/his representative) and a representative of the national statistics office. Experts in the areas covered by the AGDI will also attend.
20. The meeting will be organized both in plenary and in breakout sessions with introductory presentations, discussions by selected discussants and open discussions. The meeting will be conducted in English and French. A detailed programme of work will be shared with participants in due course.

ⁱ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women*. Sales No. 96.IV.13, paragraph 206. Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf>

ⁱⁱ United Nations Statistics Division (2015), *Gender Statistics Manual: Integrating a Gender Perspective in Statistics*. Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/What-are-gender-stats.ashx> .

ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and World Bank Institute (2010), *Developing Gender Statistics: A Practical Tool*, page 1.

^{iv} *Opcit.* 1, paragraph 206.

^v *Ibid.*

^{vi} *Ibid.*