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**REPORT ON THE PROJECT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL GENDER
STATISTICS PROGRAMMES IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES**

1. In compliance with the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), and in particular strategic objective H.3 of the Platform for Action, which called upon Member States, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies to produce and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation, the Statistics Division of ESCWA initiated a project in early 1997 entitled "Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes in the Arab Countries". The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it should be mentioned, is the principal provider of funds for that project. During the initial phases, the International Development Research Centre (Canada) (IDRC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also contributed to its financing. The Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) has recently agreed to help finance the execution of the project in two Arab countries, and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) is to cooperate in the implementation of project activities, especially in the Maghreb countries.

2. The Statistics Division is carrying out the project in nine Arab countries and areas, namely: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen. Qatar and Morocco, too, have recently expressed their desire to join the project and have begun seeking funding for the implementation of national activities.

3. Within this framework, the present report constitutes a supplement and update to that submitted by the Statistics Division to the Statistical Committee at its third session (March 1999), the discussion of which ultimately resulted in a request to ESCWA to continue work on the project, in addition to:

(a) An appeal to countries to engage in an exchange of experience and information;

(b) An invitation to those countries which had not yet joined the project to do so;

(c) A request to the statistical organizations to take steps to create units concerned with gender statistics and to continue work on the preparation of those statistics so as to cover all issues relating to women and men.

See United Nations, Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, Sales No. 96.IV.13), pages 90 ff.

I. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

A. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

4. The aim of the project is to strengthen national capacities in the field of production, use and dissemination of gender statistics at the national and regional levels with a view to influencing national policies and programmes for the advancement of women.

B. MEDIUM-TERM OBJECTIVES

1. Immediate objective I

5. To create awareness of the importance of gender statistics among national statistical offices, policy makers, decision makers, researchers and those advocating equality, and of the important role which such statistics can play in policy-making, programming and the identification of the statistics and indicators needed for measuring the degree to which national gender-related objectives are achieved.

2. Immediate objective II

6. The preparation of a national publication entitled "Women and men: a statistical portrait", for each of the countries participating in the project.

3. Immediate objective III

7. Identification of the key issues involved in the social relationship between women and men; assessment of data availability and gaps existing in national statistics systems in relation to those issues; development of national plans of action; and creation of the necessary mechanisms for rectifying data deficiencies.

4. Immediate objective IV

8. Development of a regional gender statistics database using the national data sets of the participating countries.

5. Immediate objective V

9. Preparation of a plan containing a mechanism for the implementation of the project in other Arab countries.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

10. At the national level, each of the countries participating in the project held two workshops, with the exception of Tunisia, which held three. In addition, each country established a national gender statistics database and prepared a national publication in Arabic entitled "Women and men: a statistical portrait". The ESCWA team working on the project is currently in the process of issuing booklets in English based on the national publications previously prepared.

11. Each country prepared a national report identifying the gaps and deficiencies in the data available in its statistical offices and assessing data needs. In addition, each one proposed a long-term strategy for developing national gender statistics for a period of up to five years.

12. At the regional level, ESCWA held two regional workshops on gender statistics and prepared a publication and a wall chart in English on the theme "women and men in the Arab region: a statistical portrait", both of which will be issued shortly in Arabic.

13. ESCWA undertook to update and further develop a regional database on gender statistics compiled from the countries participating in the project. It made use of national publications to complete the database with data found in tables available in computerized form. An expert is to upgrade the programmes prepared for storing and retrieving available data and for tailoring them to users' needs.

14. Indicated below are the activities carried out at the national and regional levels since the start of the project (see the annex).

A. AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

15. Explanation of and dissemination of information on the objectives and strategies of the project and the steps towards its realization through the use of various information programmes, as follows:

- (a) Preparation and publication of a brochure on the project in both Arabic and English;
- (b) Missions to participating countries by persons working on the project.

16. Review of training programmes and materials used and issuance of the Arabic version of the *Handbook for Producing National Statistical Reports on Women and Men* (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.K/14).

17. The organization of the seven-day Regional Workshop on the Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes in the Arab Countries, held in Tunis from 9 to 14 June 1997. The workshop was aimed at national capacity-building in the field of collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics and the identification of priority gender issues and the related statistics. A further aim was to formulate initial plans for the development of national gender statistics programmes in the Arab countries, with emphasis on the production of national publications on women and men.

18. The offering of assistance and advisory services to participating countries in connection with the preparation of the report entitled "Women and men: a statistical portrait" and other project-related activities and in the form of missions to participating countries; participation in the task of putting the plans of action and national strategies in those countries in their final form as well as the necessary mechanisms for their implementation, their approval by the national steering committees and their financing.

19. The organization of the Second Regional Workshop on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries, which took place in Amman over the four-day period from 8 to 11 November 1999. The principal objectives of the Workshop were to inform statisticians and users of statistics of the steps and requirements for developing gender statistics programmes; to offer advice on assessing data availability and quality; to review the methods of compiling and analysing gender statistics and presenting them to a broad public; and to prepare national plans of action for the development of gender statistics programmes.

20. The holding of meetings with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) to prepare a plan for the collection of data on Arab countries not participating in the project.

21. The issuance of a regional statistical publication and a wall chart on the conditions of women and men, entitled "Women and men in the Arab region: a statistical portrait 2000".

22. The holding of consultations and meetings with countries and donor organizations for the purpose of drafting a plan for the implementation of the project in other Arab countries, such as Bahrain, Qatar and Morocco.

23. The preparation of proposals for the implementation of the project in other Arab countries and identification of possible financing agencies.

B. AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

24. The formation, by the national statistical organization in each participating country, of a high-level steering committee and working group at the national level.
25. The holding of the first National Workshop for Producers and Users of Gender Statistics in each country. The principal aim of the workshop was to increase awareness of the social roles of men and women by identifying gender issues having priority in the society and evaluating the related gender statistics.
26. The compilation, by the national working group, of the statistics and indicators needed for the national publication entitled "Women and men: a statistical portrait", and the establishment of a plan for its production and distribution.
27. The preparation of a draft of the publication on which comments can be made, editing can be done and the typographical design and layout can be refined by a number of local experts.
28. The holding of the second National Workshop for Producers and Users of Gender Statistics in each country. The objective of the workshop was to evaluate the draft national publication entitled "Women and men: a statistical portrait" in terms of its form and content and the degree to which it succeeded in presenting and dealing with priority gender issues.
29. The drafting of the report in its final form (in Arabic) in preparation for printing, once the necessary changes were made based on the discussions that had taken place at the second National Workshop and the comments of the national steering committee.
30. Printing and distribution of the Arabic version.
31. Recording of the experience acquired in producing publications, in connection with gaps in data, theoretical problems and shortcomings relating to data collection methods and classification principles.
32. The holding of donor meetings at the national level with a view to obtaining the requisite additional financing for the implementation of national strategies and plans of action.

III. ACHIEVEMENTS REALIZED

33. Creation of awareness of the importance of gender statistics in defining the gap between the social roles of women and men with a view to determining ways to increase equality.
34. National capacity-building in the area of collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics through the training of 660 producers and users of gender statistics, and the providing of opportunities for the exchange of experience and information among the Arab countries by means of regional workshops.
35. Issuance of eight national publications on women and men in Arab countries and areas (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen).
36. Development of a regional database on gender statistics in the Arab countries.
37. Contribution to the establishment of national strategies and plans for the development of gender statistics at the national level.
38. Establishment of gender statistics units in a number of participating countries and areas, namely: Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Tunisia, Yemen.
39. The creation of a regional network of specialists in the field of gender statistics.

IV. FUTURE ORIENTATIONS

40. Based on the experience gained from the project in the field of data collection and the preparation of the national publications entitled “Women and men: a statistical portrait”, ESCWA will:

(a) Follow-up on national capacity-building and the exchange of experience and information in the field of gender statistics;

(b) Prepare a framework for gender equality indicators;

(c) Undertake analyses of available gender statistics and data related to priority issues in the countries participating in the project;

(d) Tackle new issues in the field of gender statistics that have not previously been discussed, such as: unemployment and underemployment; unpaid work; the informal sector; working conditions with regard to the distribution of occupations, wages and opportunities; time use; and violence;

(e) Disseminate gender statistics through the development of regional and national gender statistics sites on the Internet, with a view to monitoring change and the progress made in that area.

Annex

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

	Egypt	Yemen	Tunisia	Syria	Jordan	Lebanon	Algeria	Oman	Palestine
At the regional level									
Holding of the first Regional Workshop on the Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes in the Arab Countries									
					Tunisia, 9-14 June 1997				
Holding of the Second Regional Workshop on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries									
					Jordan, 8-11 November 1999				
Issuance of a regional statistical publication entitled "Women and men in the Arab region: a statistical portrait 2000"					November 1999				
Holding of the third Regional Workshop on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries									
					Tunisia, 4-6 June 2001				
At the national level									
Phase I									
Formation of a high-level steering committee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Formation of a national working group	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establishment of a timetable for carrying out national activities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Phase II									
Holding of the first National Workshop for Producers and Users of Gender Statistics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluation of the current status of gender statistics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Identification of priority gender issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Phase III									
Building of a database for the required statistical data	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress	X
Analysis of data and monitoring of trends	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Preparation of the draft national publication entitled "Women and men: a statistical portrait"	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Holding of the second National Workshop for Producers and Users of Gender Statistics to review the draft publication	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Phase IV									
Review and update of the first draft of the publication in the light of the recommendations of the workshop	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Printing of the publication, announcement of its issuance, distribution	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Phase V									
Issuing a booklet in English based on the national publication	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review		X
Establishment of a national strategy for the development of gender statistics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Holding of a donor meeting aimed at ensuring the requisite financing for national strategy implementation			X						

Note: X = Completed.