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LIBRARY & DOCUMENT SECTION

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

1. In early 1997, pursuant to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, and in pursuit of strategic objective H.3 of the Platform, which urges the Member States and organizations of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation, the Statistical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) began to implement a regional project on the development of national gender statistics programmes in the Arab countries. While the United Nations Development Programme is the principal source of funding for this project, the International Development Research Centre, Canada, and the United Nations Children's Fund also contributed during its preliminary stages. The Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations provides financial support for implementation of the project in Bahrain and Morocco. The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) cooperates in the implementation of some project activities in the countries of the Arab Maghreb.
2. Currently, ESCWA is implementing the aforementioned projects in four Arab countries, namely, Bahrain, Morocco, Oman and Qatar. Project-related work has been completed in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen.
3. This report complements and updates the material previously submitted by the Statistics Division to the Statistical Committee at its fourth session, held in April 2001. Discussion of that material concluded with commendation for the action taken and the efforts exerted, and with a request that ESCWA should continue work on the project and ensure its continuation by seeking the necessary funding for it. The following requests were also made:
 - (a) Countries were urged to build national capacities and to exchange experiences and information in the field of gender statistics;
 - (b) Countries were further urged to carry out studies on new and previously unstudied issues in the field of gender statistics including, *inter alia*, employment and unemployment, women's unpaid employment, time use, political participation and empowerment;
 - (c) A handbook should be produced on data use and how to extract indicators therefrom.

I. THE GOALS OF THE PROJECT

A. THE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

4. The principal development goal of the project is support for national capacities in the field of the generation, use and publication of gender statistics at national and regional levels, with a view to affecting policies and programmes concerned with the advancement of women.

B. MEDIUM-TERM GOALS

5. The medium-term goals of the project include the following:

(a) The creation of awareness of the importance of gender statistics in national statistical bodies and amongst policy formulators, decision makers, researchers and those pursuing equality; and to raise awareness of the significant role that can be played by statistics in formulating policies and programmes and providing the figures and indicators necessary to evaluate the progress that has been made towards realizing national gender-related goals;

(b) The preparation of a national publication entitled "Women and men: statistical portrait" in every country involved in the project;

(c) The identification of the main issues relating to women and men and the social relationship between them; the evaluation of the availability of data; and the estimation of the current shortcomings in national statistical bodies in respect of those issues; the formulation of national work plans; and the establishment of the mechanisms necessary to address data deficiencies;

(d) The development of a regional database on gender statistics which focuses on the national data relating to each participating country;

(e) The preparation of a plan that includes a mechanism for implementation of the project in the other Arab countries.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

6. Since the inception of the project, a variety of information and training activities have been carried out at national and regional level.

A. AT NATIONAL LEVEL

7. Activities carried out at national level have included the following:

(a) The establishment by the national statistical body in each participating country of a supreme steering committee and a national working group;

(b) The holding in each country of the first national workshop for producers and users of gender statistics, the principal aim of which was to increase awareness of the social roles of men and women by identifying the priority gender-related issues in society and evaluating the relevant statistics;

(c) The establishment of national working groups to gather the statistics and indicators necessary for the national publication entitled "Women and men: statistical portrait" and formulate a plan for its publication and distribution;

(d) The preparation of a draft of that publication for comment and editing by local experts, who also coordinated its typographical layout and technical form;

(e) The holding in each country of the second national workshop for producers and users of gender statistics. The aim of the workshop was to evaluate the draft national publication entitled "Women and men: statistical portrait" with respect to its form, content and success in presenting and treating priority gender issues;

(f) The finalization of the Arabic version of the publication in preparation for printing as soon as the necessary changes had been made in the light of the discussions at the second national workshop and the comments made by the national steering committees;

(g) The printing and distribution of the Arabic version;

(h) The recording of the experience gained in producing publications, with respect to the completeness of the data, the theoretical difficulties and the shortcomings of the data-gathering and classification procedure; and the preparation of a national report that identified the shortcomings and deficiencies of the data available at the statistical bodies, evaluated data requirements and proposed a long-term strategy for the development of gender statistics at national level over a possible five year period;

(i) The holding of meetings at national level for donor agencies in order to obtain the additional funding necessary to implement national strategies and work plans.

B. AT REGIONAL LEVEL

8. Activities carried out at regional level have included the following:

(a) The explanation and circulation of the goals and strategies of the project and of steps to implement it through various information programmes, as follows:

- (i) The preparation and publication of a brochure on the project in English and Arabic;
- (ii) The sending of project workers on mission to participating countries;

(b) The revision of the training programme and materials used and publication in Arabic of document ST/ESA/STAT/SER.K/14, *Handbook for Producing National Statistical Reports on Women and Men*;

(c) The organization in Tunis from 9 to 14 June 1997 of the First Regional Workshop on the Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes in the Arab Countries. The aim of the Workshop was to build national capacities in gathering, analysing and publishing gender statistics and to identify priority gender issues and the relevant statistics. It also aimed to formulate preliminary plans for the development of national gender statistics programmes, with the focus on the production of national reports on men and women;

(d) The provision of assistance and consultancy services to the participating countries in connection with preparation of the national publication entitled "Women and men: statistical portrait" and other project-related activities. Missions were dispatched to the countries involved and contributions were made to the formulation of the final versions of existing national work plans and strategies. The necessary mechanisms were developed for implementation and national steering committees approved and provided funding for those plans;

(e) The organization in Amman from 8 to 11 November 1999 of the Second Regional Workshop on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries. The aim of the Workshop was, in particular, to familiarize statisticians and users of statistics with measures and requirements for the development of gender statistics programmes; provide advice on evaluating the availability and quality of data; examine methods used to gather and analyse gender statistics and present them to a wide audience; and prepare national work plans for the development of gender statistics programmes;

(f) The holding of meetings with CAWTAR with a view to preparing a plan for the gathering of data on countries other than those participating in the project;

(g) The publication of a regional statistical report and an explanatory commentary on the condition of women and men entitled "Women and men in the Arab region: a statistical portrait 2000";

(h) The holding of consultative meetings with donor countries and organizations with a view to formulating a plan for implementing the project in other Arab countries, including Bahrain, Morocco and Qatar;

(i) The preparation of proposals concerning the implementation of the project in other Arab countries and the identification of possible sources of funding;

(j) The undertaking of two missions to Bahrain and Morocco in order to formulate a plan for implementation of the project;

(k) The organization in Tunis from 5 to 7 June 2001 of the Third Regional Workshop on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries. The aim of the Workshop was, in particular, to identify and consider policy fields and issues with priority in the Arab region in which the gender perspective and relevant statistical indicators must be taken into consideration;

(l) The holding of a training workshop for statisticians from the countries of the Arab Maghreb and the Sudan, in which participants were trained in methods of gathering and presenting statistics and calculating the related indicators;

(m) The preparation of a study on gender issues with priority in the Arab region and the relevant indicators, the aim of which was to review and evaluate gender indicators in the light of the needs and priorities of the Arab region.

III. THE RESULTS ACHIEVED

9. The most significant results achieved in the course of this project included the following:

(a) Awareness was increased of the importance of gender statistics in identifying the gaps between the roles of men and women and of the use of statistics to strengthen social equality;

(b) National capacities were built in the field of the gathering, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics, through the training of 676 producers and users of gender statistics;

(c) Seven national reports on women and men were published in the following Arab countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunis and Yemen;

(d) A regional set of gender indicators was developed;

(e) A contribution was made to the formulation of national strategies and plans for the development of gender statistics at national level;

(f) Special units for gender-disaggregated statistics were established in certain participating countries, namely, Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Tunis and Yemen;

(g) A regional network was established of specialist experts in the field of gender statistics.

IV. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

10. On the basis of the experience gained from project activities in the field of data collection and related to preparation of the national publications entitled "Women and men: statistical portrait". ESCWA intends to undertake the following action:

(a) To continue to endeavour to include all the Arab countries in project activities and, in cooperation with international and Arab organizations, follow up national capacity-building and the exchange of expertise and information in the field of gender statistics;

(b) To analyse the available gender-disaggregated statistics relating to priority issues in the countries taking part in the project;

(c) To deal with new gender statistics issues which have not been previously studied, including unemployment and underemployment, unremunerated work, the unofficial sector, working conditions with respect to the distribution of jobs, wages and opportunities, and violence;

(d) To publish gender statistics on regional and national Internet web sites.

