



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**REPORT****FIRST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON GENDER
STATISTICS IN THE ARAB REGION
BEIRUT, 15-16 OCTOBER 2009****Summary**

The First Meeting of the Task Force on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region was organized by the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at the United Nations House in Beirut on 15 and 16 October 2009.

The main output of the Meeting was the adoption of an action plan for the working groups of the Task Force. The action plan includes three main tasks: (i) propose a list of gender indicators available at national level to complement the Gender Issues and Indicators (“G Is In”) Framework; (ii) review the proposed Glossary on Gender Statistical Terms; and (iii) propose a format for a national gender website.

The objective of the Meeting was to set the terms of reference (TOR) of the Task Force; assess the status of gender statistics in the Arab region; identify the capacity-building activities needed; and develop a work plan for the activities of the Task Force.

The current report includes a review of the findings and conclusions resulting from the Meeting.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1-5	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
I. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	6-7	3
II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING	8	4
III. TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS	9-15	4
IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	16-21	5
A. Date and venue	16	5
B. Opening	17	5
C. Participants	18-19	5
D. Adoption of the agenda	20	6
E. Documents.....	21	6

LIST OF ANNEXES

I. Terms of Reference of the Arab Task Force on Gender Statistics	7
II. Work Plan.....	9
III. List of participants.....	10
IV. List of documents	14

Introduction

1. The Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized the First Meeting of the Task Force on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region at the United Nations House in Beirut on 15 and 16 October 2009.
2. This Meeting comes as a follow-up to the recommendations that emanated from the First Inter-agency and Expert Group (IAEG) Meeting on Gender and the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region (Cairo, September 2007), which stipulate, among others, to establish a regional task force on gender statistics in order to produce an action plan to mainstream gender statistics in national statistical systems.
3. Following that, ESCWA, in its twenty-fifth session, adopted resolution 286 (XXV) on Gender Statistics for Equality and Empowerment of Women, which encourages member countries to formulate and implement training programmes to mainstream gender issues and statistics into their statistical systems, with a view to sensitizing data producers and users to the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment. In addition, the resolution calls upon the secretariat to provide technical support to member countries in the form of advisory services and workshops, and assist member countries in integrating a gender perspective into national strategies for the development of statistics and national statistical system plans of action.
4. The main topics of the agenda included the adoption of the terms of reference of the Task Force; the establishment of working groups on the gender statistics database, national website and glossary; and the proposing of strategies to establish a trust fund (annex I).
5. The current report outlines the main discussion points, findings and conclusions of the meeting.

I. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

6. In line with the conclusions of the Task Force on Gender Statistics, members of the Task Force are encouraged to do the following:
 - (a) Assess availability and quality of gender statistics at the national level and report their findings to the next Task Force meeting;
 - (b) Enhance collaboration between the national statistical offices and national women machineries to compile sex-disaggregated data, in particular data on the Arab Gender Issues and Indicators ("G Is In") Framework, during 2010, and present the findings in the next IAEG meeting to be held in 2011;
 - (c) Develop national gender statistics databases and strengthen dissemination tools, including the development of a national gender website;
 - (d) Provide success stories on the impact of gender indicators on policy formulation and/or legislation to be presented to the second meeting of the Task Force on Gender Statistics;
 - (e) Provide case studies on the importance of disseminating disaggregated and relevant statistics for effective planning (examples may include ineffective planning due to the lack of relevant microdata, which, if made available, would change the course of planning) to be presented to the second meeting of the Task Force on Gender Statistics;
 - (f) Seek sources of funding for the Task Force activities from national and regional institutions, including development banks;
 - (g) Implement the work plan agreed upon and present results according to the timeline outlined in annex II.
7. ESCWA Statistics Division is requested to:

(a) Disseminate the final Glossary on Gender Statistical Terms and establish a mechanism for its regular updating and translation into other languages;

(b) Finalize and disseminate the handbook on the “G Is In” Framework to enhance harmonization of definitions and methodologies and dissemination of comparable data;

(c) Revitalize the project on the Gender Statistics Programme (GSP) in Arab countries, including capacity-building activities, covering in particular the following areas:

- (i) Time use survey;
- (ii) Violence against women;
- (iii) Gender in the economy;
- (iv) Gender analysis for monitoring and reporting;
- (v) Development of national gender statistics databases;
- (vi) Mainstreaming gender in all statistical activities;
- (vii) Gender statistical literacy.

(d) Develop a regional compendium on gender-related statistical activities.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

8. The objectives of the First Task Force Meeting on Gender Statistics were to set the terms of reference (TOR) of the Task Force; assess the status of gender statistics in the Arab region; identify capacity-building activities needed; and develop a work plan for the Task Force activities.

III. TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS

9. The Meeting included three sessions. The objective of the first session was to set the TOR of the Task Force; the second session covered redefining the activities of the regional GSP; and the third session dealt with the establishment of the working groups and the identification of the related tasks and timeline. In addition, strategies for funding the Task Force activities were discussed. , World Bank representative, Ms. Suleikha Patel, attended the Meeting in her function as consulting and development partner. Participants and organizers of the Meeting extended their gratitude to Ms. Patel for her valuable input and the guidance which she provided during the Meeting, which benefited greatly in shaping the regional programme.

10. In the first session, the participants reviewed the draft TOR of the Task Force on Gender Statistics and provided feedback on both Arabic and English versions. The Task Force agreed to limit membership to statisticians and experts on gender statistics from the national statistical offices, line ministries and women machineries. Observers will attend the sessions upon invitation. All comments were incorporated into the TOR, which are presented under annex I.

11. The second session discussed capacity-building activities needed in emerging issues and suggested incorporating specific areas under the regional GSP. Discussions revolved around mainstreaming gender into statistical activities, including redefining concepts and definitions used in surveys and training of field staff to make them aware of stereotype situations and questionnairing. This is particularly important for activities related to gender and economic issues. Participants also emphasized the need to develop national capacities in gender equality issues and, in particular, gender analysis to mainstream gender in all statistical operations. This includes building capacities of producers of statistics in the areas of data compilation, computation, analysis and writing and equipping statisticians and gender experts with adequate skills to produce quality and relevant gender indicators. The regularization of recurrent publications, for instance on women and men, and in-depth research on national gender issues were pointed out as highly important.

12. The importance of disseminating gender-related concepts and data was emphasized and the development of effective dissemination tools was encouraged. This includes developing national gender websites or disseminating results on the existing websites of the national statistical offices and women machineries as well as line ministries. Links established to the ESCWA virtual library and other related gender libraries provide a first step towards providing users with a learning tool on gender-related methodologies and activities. A compendium on activities related to gender statistics will be developed by ESCWA as a shared knowledge base for the region.

13. The Iraqi representative made a presentation on Data Assessment on Gender Statistics Availability. Participants shared important information on challenges and lessons learned during the compilation and assessment stages of the study, which provided a pilot model on how to assess the status of national gender statistics at the country level. Countries will consider adopting a similar approach while assessing availability and quality of gender statistics at the national level and report their findings to the next Task Force meeting.

14. Three working groups were established. The first working group is responsible for proposing new indicators, mapping “G Is In” with existing data sources, and shall contribute to the outline of a training manual on gender statistics. The second working group is responsible for reviewing the proposed Gender Statistics Glossary prepared by ESCWA in Arabic and English, and for its further translation into the French language, and the third working group is responsible for preparing a national template on gender statistics website. The three working groups made proposals for a work plan as presented in annex II.

15. Strategies to raise funds for the work of the Task Force and national projects were also discussed. Countries were requested to seek financial support for the establishment of a Task Force Fund from national and regional institutions and organizations, including development banks.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

16. The First Meeting of the Task Force on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region was held at the United Nations House in Beirut on 15 and 16 October 2009 and was organized by the ESCWA Statistics Division.

B. OPENING

17. The meeting was opened by Ms. Neda Jafar, statistician for gender and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) at ESCWA. Ms. Jafar welcomed the participants and outlined the Meeting objectives and its expected accomplishments, namely, assess the status of gender statistics in the Arab region, identify capacity-building activities needed and develop short- and medium-term work plans for the Task Force. Ms. Jafar also welcomed Ms. Suleikha Patel, the World Bank representative, to the meeting and expressed her appreciation for the interest of the World Bank in regional activities on gender statistics.

C. PARTICIPANTS

18. The Meeting was attended by 23 participants from 14 Arab countries, namely, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The Meeting was also attended by representatives from the World Bank and the League of Arab States.

19. Arab women machineries from the following countries were represented: Bahrain (Supreme Council for Women), Egypt (The National Council for Women), Iraq (Ministry of Women’s Affairs), Qatar (Supreme Council for Family Affairs) and Yemen (Women National Committee). A full list of participants is available in annex III of this report.

D. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

20. The adopted agenda of the Meeting on Gender Statistics is shown below.
 1. Opening of the Meeting.
 2. Proposed Terms of Reference of the Task Force on Gender Statistics.
 3. Regional Programme on Gender Statistics
 4. Working groups on:
 - (a) Gender database;
 - (b) National website on gender statistics;
 - (c) Glossary on gender statistical terms.
 5. Strategies for establishing a trust fund for gender statistics.
 6. Adoption of a work plan

E. DOCUMENTS

21. A list of documents presented to the Meeting is included in annex IV of this report.

Annex I

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ARAB TASK FORCE ON GENDER STATISTICS

Background

The First Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region (Cairo, 10-11 September 2007) recommended the establishment of an Arab task force on gender statistics. The recommendation called for the establishment of a regional task force on gender statistics in order to produce an action plan to mainstream gender statistics in national statistical systems. ESCWA adopted, at its twenty-fifth session, resolution 286 (XXV) on Gender Statistics for Equality and Empowerment of Women, which encourages member countries to formulate and implement training programmes to mainstream gender issues and statistics into their statistical systems, with a view to sensitizing data producers and users to the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment. The resolution further Calls upon the secretariat to provide technical support to member countries in the form of advisory services and workshops, and assist member countries in integrating a gender perspective into national strategies for the development of statistics and national statistical system plans of action.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Arab Task Force on Gender Statistics were finalized during the First Task Force Meeting on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region (15-16 October 2009), organized by the ESCWA Statistics Division at the United Nations House in Beirut. Below is a detailed description of the TOR of the Task Force:

Terms of Reference of the Arab Task Force on Gender Statistics

Mission

To be the driving vehicle for the development of gender statistics in the Arab region in order to enhance the overall quality of official statistics pertinent for the establishment and execution of effective policies.

Basic principles

- (a) To preserve, build on, and develop on experiences acquired;
- (b) To expand membership so as to include bodies active in the field who have expressed their desire to join the Task Force, including experts in gender issues, producers and users alike, as well as regional and international organizations and development banks.

Responsibilities

- (a) To coordinate efforts made in the Arab region towards the development of a regional perspective in gender statistics to enhance the delivery of capacity-building efforts;
- (b) To contribute to the development of technical material that integrates the regional perspective and to facilitate access to global initiatives in the development and dissemination of gender statistics;
- (c) To follow up on the implementation of related gender statistics resolutions and recommendations emerging from the ESCWA Statistics Committee, ESCWA ministerial sessions, the Statistical Commission and the Technical Committee of the League of Arab States through its working groups created to carry out specific tasks in order to achieve expected outputs;

(d) To seek avenues to raise funds for developing gender statistics at the regional level, to establish a trust fund for the implementation of activities, and to hold annual Task Force meetings.

Membership

The Arab national statistical offices are permanent members of the Task Force on Gender Statistics through their gender statistics focal points. Gender experts from women machineries and line ministries are also welcome to participate in the meetings.

Chairmanship

The trust fund will be chaired by a representative from a national statistical office for a duration of two years, following the English alphabetical order of Arab member countries. The chairperson will be assisted by a deputy and a rapporteur, who will both be nominated during a Task Force meeting and will serve for the same duration as the chairperson.

Mechanism of work

(a) The Task Force on Gender Statistics will coordinate its actions by means of a plan of action which shall be developed, endorsed and adopted by the Task Force itself;

(b) ESCWA, the executing agency for the Task Force, in cooperation and collaboration with regional and international partners, will be responsible for the organization and administrative procedures necessary for the implementation of the plan of action of the Task Force;

(c) The Task Force, depending upon availability of funds, will meet at least once every year. It is also recommended that, as a standard practice, this yearly meeting be held back-to-back with the Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on Gender and the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region;

(d) The Task Force members are responsible to develop their capacities to act as leading agents of change at national level, trainers in gender statistics and experts in the field;

(e) The Task Force members will advocate and raise awareness through developing and publishing technical materials, including audio multimedia, newsletters and wall charts on thematic issues by its working groups.

Working groups

Working groups are established for specified tasks and shall be dissolved once all targets are met. The tasks of new working groups are agreed upon by the members of the Task Force.

Meetings

Meetings of the Task Force will be held on an annual basis, upon availability of funds or hosting, and will be scheduled back-to-back to the Inter-agency Expert Group Meeting on Gender and the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region held every two years.

Annex II

WORK PLAN

The members of the Task Force on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region agreed on establishing three working groups with the following tasks and timeline:¹

Tasks of working groups (WG)	Timeline	Team
1) Indicators/database/training manual		
ESCWA provides the following: (a) E-copy of core ICT indicators; (b) World Bank Indicators on energy, mining, information and communications technology (ICT), transport, urban development and water sanitation; (c) UNDP indicators.	October 2009	Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, the Sudan
WG sends specific proposals for indicators on such issues as economy, ICT, and environment.	December 2009	
ESCWA sends a prototype of CEDAW ² mapping indicators via-a-vis the "G Is In" Framework (example of Egypt).	February 2010	
WG sends ESCWA CEDAW mapping of countries.	2 nd quarter 2010	
ESCWA reviews additional indicators with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), finalizes proposals for core and extended indicators and disseminates findings.	1 st quarter 2010	
Countries compile data against the final "G Is In" Framework.	September 2010	
2) Glossary of Gender Statistical Terms		
ESCWA provides the following sources: (a) Glossaire de la Violence 2007; (b) http://74.125.113.132/search?q=cache:fqYfvCI6t-8J:www.peacewomen.org/resources/1325/Gender-Glossary-updated.pdf+info%40medinstgenderstudies.org+glossary&cd=4&hl=ar&ct=clnk&gl=lb ; (c) Template Excel sheet.	October 2009	-Group A: English/ Arabic countries: Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen -Goup B: English/ French countries: Morrocco, Tunisia
WG provides terms (revised and additional).	December 2009	
ESCWA exchanges revised glossary with experts, finalizes it and uploads it on the Web.	December 2009	
WG finds definitions for the terms of the finalized glossary.	2 nd quarter 2010	
3) National website proposal		
WG sends ESCWA components of the website.	November 2009	Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, League of Arab States
ESCWA sends feedback.	November 2009	
WG sends ESCWA final proposed website after review of comments.	1 st quarter 2010	

¹ The timeline was adjusted to be in line with the final report of the Meeting.

² CEDAW stands for Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Annex III*

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Annex IV

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Procedural documents

Agenda
Proposed Organization of Work
Information Note

Background documents

Final Report: Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on Gender and the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region (Cairo, 10-11 September 2007) (English and Arabic)

ESCWA resolution 286 (XXV) on Gender Statistics for Equality and Empowerment of Women (E/ESCWA/SD/2008/2) (English and Arabic)

Gender in the Millennium Development Goals: Information Guide for Arab Millennium Development Goal Reports (E/ESCWA/SCU/2007/Technical Paper 1) (English and Arabic)

References

Final report: Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (Rome, 13 December 2007)

Final report: Second Meeting of the Interagency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (Accra, 29 January 2009)
