

## Workshop summary

### Beirut, 13 September 2017

The workshop on Measuring Women's Representation in Local Government in the ESCWA region, jointly convened by UN Women and UNESCWA on 12-13 September 2017 gathered national representatives of national statistical offices, electoral management bodies, line ministries overseeing local government and women's machineries.

The group:

- Emphasized the importance of SDG indicator 5.5.1b on women's participation in local government in providing a more holistic picture of women's participation in political life.
- Noted that the indicator measures the proportion of women in local government institutions, and that local government institutions are defined in constitutions and laws at the national level.
- Learned about key programmes and activities undertaken by UN ESCWA Statistics Division to support the capacity of countries in the region to produce gender statistics and use them to understand women's political participation, availability of SDG gender-related national data in the Global SDG database and challenges to produce and disseminate data. The meeting also discussed steps to increase the production process in the NSS and importance of collaboration.
- Received well the UN Women-led research on local government organization across the world and contributed with knowledge on local government organization in the region.
- Understood the terms and definitions related to local government and applied them in constructing local government profiles of their own countries.
- Agreed that the criteria for a good indicator include relevance, clarity, comparability, measurability, cost effectiveness and produced on a regular basis.
- Acknowledged the importance of availability of statistics on women and men in all local government positions, disaggregated by tier of government, manner of selection, and leadership positions.
- Noted that covering all local government tiers in the specifications of the indicator would make visible the contribution and influence of millions of women as members of local government.
- Discussed the pros and cons of focusing the SDG indicator 5.5.1b on elected positions in the local legislative bodies, as low-cost source of data that would ensure comparability of the indicator across countries.
- Recognized the complementarity of roles in data production, dissemination and use, played by national entities and the need for further building the partnerships in between national statistical offices, electoral management bodies, line ministries overseeing local government and women's machineries.
- Noted the importance of using official data produced by the statistical system, including the NSOs and EMBs and line ministries (where relevant). This will include producing meta data regularly in line with the agreed global methodology to ensure sustainability and comparability.
- Agreed that there are emerging good practices with regard to technology application in electoral administration which enables data to be disaggregated by sex, age, education and other LNOB categories.

- Emphasized that: (1) permanent electoral management bodies and line ministries of local government overseeing local elections are the key primary source of data in the region; (2) national statistical offices have a key role as overall coordinators of production of statistics; in ensuring data quality; and the combination of data on women's representation in local government with other statistics produced, at relevant sub-national levels; (3) women's machineries have a key role in advocating for data production and using the data for policy making.
- Noted the importance of potentially developing additional statistics and indicators on political participation and in electoral management, including voter turnout and influence of women on policy making.
- Noted the importance of producing this wider range of data to support national policy-making, research, and monitoring at regional and global levels.