

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February to 11 March 2005

Panel IV: “Remaining challenges in relation to statistics and indicators, building on the discussions at the High-level round table organized in the 48th session of the Commission 2004 as well as available data from the World’s Women: Trends and Statistics (2005) and the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (2005)”

Summary submitted by the Moderator (Beatrice Maille)

1. At its 14th meeting, on 8 March 2005, the Commission held a panel discussion followed by a dialogue on “Remaining challenges in relation to statistics and indicators, building on the discussions at the High-level round table organized in the 48th session of the Commission 2004 as well as available data from the World’s Women: Trends and Statistics (2005) and the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (2005)”. The panelists were: Ms. Paula Monina Collado, Deputy Administrator, Philippines National Statistics Office; Ms. Tatiana Gorbacheva, Director, Department for Statistics of Labour, Education, Science and Culture Statistics, Russian Federation; Ms. Vivian Milsavljevic, Statistician, Women and Development Unit, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; Ms. June Zeitlin, Executive Director of the Women’s Environment and Development Organization; Ms. Mary Chamie, Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Division, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs; Ms. Hania Zlotnik, Director, Population Division, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs; Ms. Kristiina Kangaspunta, representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Francesca Perucci, Officer-in-charge, Statistical Planning and Development Section, United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

2. An issues paper prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, the *2005 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women and International Migration* and available data from the special report of the *World’s Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*, provided the framework for the dialogue and supported the discussion.

3. Participants underscored the importance of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators for measuring and assessing progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and for effective policy formulation and programme design to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, efforts to collect such data, through censuses and surveys, and to develop systems of gender-sensitive indicators had continued and expanded into new areas, supported by capacity-building initiatives. As a consequence, more experience and capacity now existed to measure and undertake gender-based analysis in the economic and social areas. Efforts to achieve the time-bound targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had further heightened the need

for sex-disaggregated data, and intensified discussions on the gender dimensions of all the MDGs and adequate measurement of progress towards their achievement. Availability of sex-disaggregated data and analysis, including in specialized publications, served also as important advocacy tools for gender equality.

4. Participants underlined the importance of collaboration and networking of national machineries for the advancement of women and other advocates for gender equality with national statistical offices/bureaux and other stakeholders in achieving progress in the collection, dissemination and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and statistics, and the preparation of gender-sensitive indicators. Such collaboration between users and producers of data clarified their respective needs and constraints, encouraged the development of new methodological approaches and increased accountability of all actors for gender equality. International organizations and non-governmental organizations also played an important role by supporting and encouraging the collection, dissemination and use of sex-disaggregated data. Work to measure progress in achieving the MGDs had also led to the establishment of new mechanisms and collaborative efforts for data collection and analysis at national and international level.

5. Notwithstanding the achievements made, participants were concerned about the insufficient progress in collection, dissemination and use of data disaggregated by sex at the national level, and the limited reliability of some data. Irregular collection of data continued to make the assessment of trends over time difficult. In many areas, existing methodologies did not include gender perspectives, and the resulting measurements insufficiently reflected the situation of women. Furthermore, measurement efforts continued to focus on numbers, or quantifiable aspects, thus neglecting many critical qualitative aspects of the Beijing Platform for Action that were more difficult to measure.

6. Greater efforts and creative approaches and ideas were, however, also needed to make better use of existing statistics. Lack of user demand for certain data could result in late availability or non-tabulation, as for example in the area of international migration. The *2005 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* had highlighted the need for sex-disaggregated data in order to facilitate expanded gender-based analysis of international migration. A first United Nations *Global Report on Human Trafficking Trends* would be issued later in 2005, and would also highlight the methodological difficulties in collecting reliable and comprehensive data in this area, as well as point out ways in which these could be addressed. The forthcoming United Nations report on the *World's Women 2005* would highlight areas where lack of, or insufficient data made gender-specific measurements and analysis difficult, such as in regard to housing, violence against women, and poverty. Other areas where significant gender-related data was lacking and methodological gaps persisted included women's economic participation including employment, armed conflict, the environment and natural resource management, trafficking in women, and macro-economic issues including trade, migration and globalization.

7. While noting the importance of achieving the MDGs, participants expressed concern about the lack of gender-sensitivity in the existing indicators. This was, for example, the case with current poverty measurements which insufficiently reflected women's poverty as well as their contribution to the economy. Other indicators, including those on education and power and

decision-making, also failed to capture important gender-specific aspects. The absence of indicators on issues such as violence against women and sexual and reproductive health in the MDGs was especially noted.

8. Participants highlighted the need to ensure collection of data disaggregated also by other factors, in particular age and race, to ensure targeted policies in support of vulnerable groups of women. Particular attention should be paid to the situation of women in rural areas and in the informal sector. Some countries, especially those emerging from conflict, were faced with an almost complete lack of data and limited capacity for data collection. Concern was also expressed about under-funding, or cuts in funding, for social and gender statistics at national and international level. The need for a long-term investment in systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data and for methodology and indicator development in all areas was emphasized. In addition to better data collection, there was also a significant need to enhance capacity for gender analysis of data and statistics.

9. Areas where future work was planned included methodological work to enhance the gender sensitivity of budgeting processes and of agricultural statistics. Collection and analysis of crime statistics also should be enhanced to improve measurements on violence against women, and a United Nations methodology for measuring domestic violence was called for. Participants suggested that the focus of future improvements in collection and analysis should be on areas such as work, reproductive health and rights, domestic violence, education including quality of education, and poverty. Greater efforts should be made to disseminate and widely publicize the results of surveys. It was suggested that the time use study the United Nations had prepared in the 1990s should be updated.

10. As availability of gender statistics received a higher profile, the importance of exchanging experiences and lessons learned was stressed. Participants emphasized that reliable and systematic data collection, dissemination and use required adequate financial and human resources and capacity-building, particularly at the national level. The hope was expressed that the Commission on the Status of Women would continue to discuss the questions of data collection and methodological development and analysis at its fiftieth session.