



Concept Note

Regional Consultation on the SDG Baseline Publication: Evidence-based Advocacy for Gender Equality and Localisation of SDGs in Asia and the Pacific

15-17 November 2016
Bangkok Thailand

1. BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

Data and statistics are important tools for devising policies to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, assessing their impact, and ensuring accountability. At the international level there have been important advances in normative and technical standards related to gender statistics. At the regional level, the ***SDGs Baseline Publication*** serves as a critical evidence-based policy advocacy tool to advance the strategic positioning of gender statistics as a key part of evidence-based policy-making for the next 15 years. In this regard, rigorous evidence is integral to inform policy to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The Baseline Publication is expected to provide a snapshot of the current status (baseline) as well as concrete measurements of progress towards gender equality in relation to the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific region. Simultaneously, it aims to identify data gaps (in statistics) as well as provide a policy tool to help governments in the region to improve gender equality outcomes by 2030.

In connection to this, the formulation and use of this publication require close collaboration between UN Women/ADB and other UN agencies, which have different leading roles in various priorities areas under the SDGs, as well as a wide range of partners, including governments and civil society representatives. Simultaneously, regional multi-stakeholder consultation is required to enhance strategic partnerships and ownership of the SDGs Baseline Publication as well as its policy recommendations among the Member States, civil society and key relevant stakeholders.

In partnership with ADB, UN Women's coordination role helps to promote synergies within the UN system through the UN Regional Coordination Mechanisms, the Thematic Working Group on Gender and Statistics (co-chaired by UNESCAP and UN Women) as well as to reach out to key stakeholders through inter-governmental processes. With a unique coordination mandate, UN Women is well placed to play a strong role in promoting a coordinated and harmonised approach to enhancing gender statistics and evidence-based policy direction, including key measurements of progress towards gender equality vis-à-vis the SDG goals and targets at the regional and country levels.

Given the strategic partnerships of ADB and UN Women with the generous support of the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI), this Regional Consultation will expand important partnerships and collaboration with other key stakeholders at the regional and country levels that will provide a strong foundation for the formulation and implementation of Baseline Publication.

These include the mapping of existing data and identification of data gaps that will be carried out for all gender related SDG goals and targets (not limited to selected list of indicators)¹ as well as support to the roll-out of the Publication that will include multi-stakeholder collaborations to identify concrete ways to enhance commitment of Member States as well as their accountability of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs in the next 15 years.

2. OBJECTIVE AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The overall purpose of the regional consultation is to garner feedback on the key findings of the Baseline Publication and to support the use of the Baseline Publication as a policy tool to advocate for achieving gender equality, empowerment of women and promotion of women's rights in the context of SDG localisation at the regional and country levels. Simultaneously, the regional multi-stakeholder consultation will lay the groundwork to promote a common and harmonised approach to enhancing collaboration on gender statistics, including key areas for policy development and capacity building support for countries in the region.

More specifically, the consultation is expected to lead to the following **key results**:

- Common understanding of the current situation on gender equality and women's empowerment, including, trends, gaps, opportunities and challenges in the region
- South-south learning and knowledge exchange on data availability and comparability across the region for tracking progress across all the gender related SDG goals and targets
- Critical feedback from key national stakeholders to finalize the Baseline Publication
- Recommendations to support the roll out of the Baseline Publication and the indicator framework for monitoring progress towards gender equality vis-à-vis the SDGs tailored to the Asia-Pacific region.
- Initial user-producer dialogue to increase accessibility, quality and demand for gender statistics. This consultation will identify potential entry points to institutionalised forums for national statistical offices to engage with policy and decision makers to prove their understanding of statistical information and identify data gaps
- Identification of specific areas for policy and capacity development for countries on gender statistics. These includes areas of work for capacity development of government, civil society and other actors to use and analyse and use gender statistics to inform policy decision-making processes

¹ Following a wide-ranging consultation process with United Nations Member States, civil society and international organizations, UN Women presented suggestions for indicators to effectively monitor progress towards gender equality vis-à-vis the SDGs. In this regard, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal (IAEG-SDGs) was established to develop an indicator framework for monitoring the SDG goals and targets at the global level and to support its implementations. Currently the list of indicators went through a number of consultations, which will then be submitted to ECOSOC and the General Assembly for endorsement. Once the final list of global indicators is approved, the next step will be ensuring clear definitions and identification of data sources and other metadata for the different indicators, as well as to start the work on establishing the baseline.



3. PARTNERSHIP AND SCOPE OF WORK

With the generous support of the KWDI, the work will be led by UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and ADB. However, other relevant partners at the regional and country levels will be brought into this regional consultation, including the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and other UN agencies. The Asia-Pacific regional consultation will be organized in Bangkok, Thailand, on 15-17 November 2016 and will include participants from four sub-regions: East Asia, South-East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific. The consultation will include the validation of the statistical part of the Publication and feedback on key findings of the Baseline Publication. It will also include the forward-looking part of the Publication, including the roll-out plan of the Baseline Publication (following the key policy recommendations) and identification of key areas to enhance gender statistics, policy advocacy, as well as capacity development support to enhance policy commitment to promote gender equality and empowerment of women at the regional and country levels.

Country participants should include government representatives, national statistical offices, national women machineries, and civil society representatives (approximately two participants per country). Among of these countries it is critical to ensure participation of the Pacific countries.

Bringing different partners on board is critical to ensure the publication's usability and acceptability of the information and data contained in the Baseline Publication. Indeed, similar to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a global structure and system will be put in place to establish an over-all baseline and monitor the SDGs implementation. As such it is imperative that the Baseline Publication (a) feeds into the global monitoring system and (b) be used and accepted by the different lead monitoring agencies for the selected indicators as well as the countries covered. As such, ownership of the Baseline Publication will be key to impact its over-all usability.