Interactive expert panel
Enhancing availability and use of data and gender statistics to support accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Monday, 20 March 2017, United Nations

Overview

At its sixty-first session, the Commission on the Status of Women will evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from its fifty-eighth session (CSW58, 2014), on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls," as its review theme. In addition to the voluntary presentations of Member States, scheduled to take place on 15 and 16 March 2017, respectively, the evaluation will include an interactive discussion on the need to enhance availability of gender statistics and their use.

The present note sets out the format for the interactive expert panel on the collection, reporting, use and analysis of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics.

The CSW 58 agreed conclusions set out actions to strengthen the evidence base for gender equality and the empowerment of women, including the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender statistics, to improve data on women's poverty, income distribution within households, unpaid care work, women's access to, control and ownership of assets and productive resources, and women's participation at all levels of decision-making. The agreed conclusions also emphasized the need for greater capacity-building, enhancing standards and methodologies for data use at the national and international levels, and developing national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess policies and programmes to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.

Building on the momentum from CSW58, there have been important advances at the international level to produce quality gender statistics to measure progress on women and girls. In March 2016, the United Nations Statistical Commission identified a robust set of 230 unique indicators to monitor progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, data are available for less than one quarter of the selected indicators to monitor the gender-related SDGs and over 80 per cent of the indicators in SDG 5 do not have accepted international standards for measurement, and data collection by most countries is irregular. Similarly, many of the gender-related indicators in the other Goals – such as the gender dimensions of poverty, gender pay gaps, women's representation in local governments, violence and abuse, access to justice and gender-responsive indicators related to the environment – currently lack comparable methodologies for comprehensive and periodic monitoring.

For realizing the 2030 Agenda, localization of targets and indicators and effective monitoring of the SDGs will be critical to ensure their implementation and to hold governments and relevant stakeholders accountable to the commitments made. Improving the availability, accessibility and use of quality gender statistics to inform policy, advocacy and accountability will thus be crucial

for delivering gender equality and women's empowerment commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action, the SDGs, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and other national priorities.

The expert panel will provide an opportunity to highlight progress and gaps in the availability of gender statistics in the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs. The panel will focus on the collection, reporting, use and analysis of data, their dissemination and wide availability, with particular emphasis on the needs of national gender equality mechanisms, and their collaboration with specialized statistical services at national level.

Format, topics and proposed questions
The interactive expert panel will start with short presentations (8-10 minutes) by five experts from national gender equality mechanisms, academia, civil society organizations and national statistical offices, followed by comments by a discussant, and questions and contributions from Member States and other stakeholders addressed to the panelists.

The panel will focus on two key areas, namely:
- Data needs of national policy-making organs, and in particular gender equality mechanisms, to inform evidence-based policy-making on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and the role and contributions of national statistical offices, academia and civil society organizations

- Strengthening the links between data producers and users for effective monitoring and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for women and girls, everywhere

Suggested questions to guide the discussion:
- How can coordination and collaboration among Government and other stakeholders around the production, dissemination and use of gender statistics strengthen the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for women and girls everywhere? What are key challenges and how can those be addressed?

- How can national gender equality mechanisms strengthen collaboration with national statistical offices to ensure the systematic use of gender statistics in evidence-based policy-making for gender equality and women's rights and empowerment? What are good practices for facilitating collaboration across government agencies to enhance data availability, accessibility and use at the national level?

- What roles can academia and civil society organizations play in order to strengthen the links between data production and their use, to inform evidence-based policies to achieve the SDGs for women and girls everywhere?

Outcome
The discussions of the interactive expert panel, which will focus on data gaps and challenges, and highlight good practices and lessons learned from the users' perspective, will be reflected in the form of a summary by the Chair of the Commission, regarding data use. The outcome will also serve as a contribution to the 2017 High-Level Political Forum.