

*Seminar on  
Statistics and Indicators  
on Women in Asia*

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Pre-Workshop Resources



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## Foreword

Statistics are an essential ingredient of planning and a basic tool for programme monitoring and policy evaluation. It is nevertheless difficult to obtain accurate data on some social phenomena and other relevant information about segments of national populations.

The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women which were adopted in 1985, stated that "timely and reliable statistics on the situation of women have an important role to play in the elimination of stereotypes and the movement towards full equality..."

The insufficiency and inaccuracies of existing data on gender-specific issues have long been recognized as major difficulties, if not obstacles, in making women's role and status justly visible and in designing effective programmes and projects for the advancement of women.

Problems associated with the use and quality of gender statistics should be addressed jointly by data producers and data users. Collective effort between and among data producers and users is crucial in developing strategies for improving the use and quality of gender statistics. The lack of communication and collaboration between the producers and users of statistical data frequently results in under-utilization of existing data, poor presentation of information and unduly limited selection of indicators being made available to public users.

Several programmes and projects have been initiated by different international agencies in responding to these problems.

The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) has given priority to issues and problems concerning gender statistics and developed concrete programs to reliable information on women. These programs consist of interlocking components of research, training, and information dissemination so designed to assist efforts at the

## Acknowledgements

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# 1. Introduction and Objectives

## **Introduction**

Two important ideas are central to the workshop and this package. The first is that reliable, relevant, accurate, and clear statistical information on women and men is essential for effective planning, efficient use of resources, and successful management. The second is that the workshop and the development of a draft country paper provide an excellent opportunity to establish dialogues so that relevant statistical needs can be recognised and realised.

## **Aim and Objectives**

The overall aim is for you and your fellow country representative to make best use of information resources and enhance your understanding of gender-specific statistics.

The design of the pre-workshop package reflects this action-orientation. The aim of the package is to assist the two of you together to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from the workshop itself. By working together through this pre-workshop package, you will be able to:

- define information needs critical to a policy or programme issue in your country,
- identify information that is currently available,
- identify key indicators,
- present data in an accessible form,
- identify gaps between needed and available information,
- develop preliminary action plans for bridging information gaps,
- develop implementation and monitoring skills, and
- share your findings, conclusions, and proposals with the other participants at the workshop.

## **Country Presentation**

You are asked to be prepared to deliver a "country paper" at the workshop itself in Osaka, Japan, over the period 8 to 15 March 1994. The country paper should stem logically from pre-workshop activities. The contents of the package are intended to help you prepare your paper.

Section 2 discusses the need for gender-specific statistics.

Section 3 suggests a method for developing your paper.

Section 4 highlights some key issues on compiling indicators on the situation of women.

Section 5 discusses likely sources of basic data.

Section 6 discusses sex biases in statistics.

Some supplementary readings are attached. They discuss a range of concepts and ideas that may be of interest to you as you develop your paper.

*Note:* INSTRAW requires you to send them an executive summary (one page) of your paper by the 11th of February 1994.

## 2. The Need for Gender-Specific Statistics

### The Uses of Statistics

Statistics are essential for effective planning, for decision making, and for evaluating programmes and policies. They provide a factual basis for understanding and describing the world. Without statistical information, planning and decision making are too often based on individual perceptions of the world or on anecdotal evidence. The result can be misdirected policies and programmes that do not meet their objectives.

### Who Uses Statistics?

Government departments and Ministries use statistics in forming policies and programmes and to monitor the impact of policies as they are implemented.

Semi-government and non-government organisations use statistics to measure and describe their areas of interest and responsibility, to identify programme target groups, and to plan, implement and monitor programmes.

University staff and others in similar positions use statistics in teaching and research.

Organisations and groups in the community (such as women's groups) use statistics to measure and understand the social situation, define problems and develop solutions to those problems.

The United Nations and its agencies and other international organisations, such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, use statistics to measure and understand global and regional patterns and problems, to develop programmes in response to those problems, and to highlight areas in countries for which they could provide technical assistance and financial support.

The task of the statistician is to provide information to suit users, usually within a tight budget and with other constraints on resources.

## **Can Users' Needs Be Better Met?**

All these users have different information needs. Some users may have more influence than others over the way statistics are collected and presented. For example, international demands for economic reporting often result in economic and labour market statistics that reflect only the formal sector and give no information on productivity in the informal sector. Yet, in developing countries, the informal sector makes a significant contribution to GDP and is the chief location of women's economic activity.

A better dialogue between statisticians and those who use statistics can help ensure that existing statistical collections are modified and presented in ways that respond to the needs of a wider range of users.

The challenge to statisticians is to provide statistics that are relevant, timely, accurate and accessible to all users.

The challenge to users is to know how to formulate their questions for a statistical answer, where to find statistics, how to assess the quality of statistics, and how to make the best use of the data that is available.

The purpose of this pre-workshop project is to encourage users and statisticians to work together to make statistics more relevant and accessible.

One of the ways in which statistical collections can meet a wide range of requirements is for them to present as detailed a picture as possible of the society they describe. Information on a population is most useful when it describes differences within that population and links those differences to key indicators of well-being, development or opportunity.

Statistics presented as aggregates of the total population may mask important differences between subgroups such as regional populations, ethnic groups, or women and men.

## **Gender Differences**

In all countries, cultures and classes, women's lives are different from men's lives. The differences vary from culture to culture, but generally, women have the major responsibility

for raising children, for managing the household and often for providing daily subsistence for their families. These responsibilities shape and constrain the ways in which they participate in the community and contribute to the economy.

In addition to caring for children and managing homes, many women work to provide food for their households. They work in fishing, fields, and gardens, and often sell the goods they produce.

All over the world, women's work is located in the household and in the informal sector, and women's jobs are typically part time, temporary or seasonal, and multiple.

These differences mean that changes impact differently on women and men. For example, development schemes which encourage the production of cash crops for export may appear to be increasing the wealth of an area if the returns are measured on a per capita basis. Examination of the returns for men and for women, however, may reveal that the greater part of the cash profit is going to the men, and figures on overall productivity may show that land once used for subsistence farming has gone to produce the cash crop and that women and children have less to live on as a result.

To enable planners to make informed decisions, statisticians need to present data that is accurate, reliable, current, gender-specific, and that meets users' diverse needs: this is the aim of this pre-workshop package.



### 3. Pre-Workshop Projects

#### A. Developing Your Country Paper

**General Approach** In the first pre-workshop project, the user and the statistician work together on a case study to explore information needs and how well existing statistical collections can meet these needs.

- Method**
1. Choose a problem, programme or issue which you can analyse in terms of the needs of both women and men. This becomes your case study<sup>1/</sup>.
  2. Specify the information needs relevant to your selected case study.
  3. Identify the information available from existing statistical collections to meet your specified information needs.
  4. Develop key indicators.
  5. Present the data in a form that is easy to follow.
  6. Assess the adequacy of existing data to resolve the issues in the case study.
  7. Summarise the outcomes of steps 1 to 6 and develop the summary as a draft country paper to bring to the workshop.

(Each of these steps is explained in more detail on the following pages.)

This project should enhance your appreciation of what you can achieve with existing statistical resources. It should also increase your awareness of any gaps and inadequacies in the data. Ways of overcoming these will be discussed at the

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<sup>1/</sup> A list of suggested themes which are described in the following pages correspond to the eight "critical areas of concern" identified for future action to be discussed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

workshop. You will be asked to complete your country paper after the workshop. Discussions at the workshop should help you to develop recommendations for overcoming gaps and inadequacies in the data.

*Step 1*  
**Select Your Case Study**

The user participant should initiate step 1. To start, select a problem, programme or policy issue. Following is the list of priority areas identified as the critical themes for the Fourth World Conference on Women from which you could select one as your case study:

1. inequality in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels.
2. insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women;
3. lack of awareness of and commitment to internationally and nationally recognised women's rights;
4. poverty;
5. inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies, and the productive process itself;
6. inequality in access to education, health, employment and other means to maximize awareness of rights and the use of their capacities;
7. violence against women;
8. effects on women of continuing national and international armed or other kinds of conflicts.

Having selected your case study, talk to as many people as possible to identify the information needed to describe accurately all the issues relevant to the core problem. Doing this will focus your data gathering on ways of meeting user group needs. It will also enable users to monitor outcomes.

Questions you might find helpful in deciding on the information needed include:

- What are the most urgent concerns in the issue you have chosen to look at?
- What are the important questions to be answered?
- What changes would you like to see in this area?
- What are the issues for women and for men?

**Example: step 1**

To illustrate the steps in the project, we have chosen to focus on inequality in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels. Thus:

*The case study* - the evolution of women's and men's participation in political and economic decision-making bodies.

*The area of concern* - To find out the part women play in the economy and in politics. Are they disadvantaged relative to men in their access to decision-making positions, work and in the level of reward? If so, in what way?

**Step 2  
Identify Information  
Needs**

Having identified the problem or issue for your case study, the next step is to define the *details* of the information needed, develop appropriate policies and programmes, and also to monitor and evaluate them.

The best way to start deciding on what information is needed is to consider what questions need to be answered. Talk to people in the area you have chosen to focus on about what they believe are the most important questions to be answered.

Having decided on the questions to be answered, the next step is to translate these into statistical information needs. At this stage, you need to meet with the statistician who will be working with you in the workshop. Together, you can define the statistical information needs. To do this, you have to decide on all the information you need to answer each question. Discussing the questions with others is helpful too. Alongside each question, itemise your information needs as illustrated in the next table.

When defining your statistical information needs, think about *why* the information is needed and *how* specifically you would use the statistics.

### Example-continued

In our example on inequality in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels, some key questions identified include:

- What is the rate of participation of women in parliamentary assemblies, in government offices at highest levels, in foreign affairs and in local representative bodies?
- What proportion of employers and own-account workers is women? (indicator of women as economic decision-makers in the private sector)
- What proportions of administrative and managerial posts are occupied by women?
- What percentage of business establishments is registered to women, to men or jointly?
- Indicate changes through time of all the above indicators

The statistician can advise whether a statistical answer can meet the user's information needs and help you clarify or refine concepts and terms.

### Step 3 Identify Available Information

The statistician participant is best able to deal with this step. The information you need for your case study may be spread across a range of data collections, so it is important to examine all available data sources, including, for example, the population census, household surveys, and administrative collections.

Refer also to Section 5 for additional information. In searching the statistical output that is currently available, do not restrict yourself to statistics produced by the national statistical agency. Other government agencies, universities and non-governmental organisations may be additional sources of published information.

When you have assembled information from the various sources, you may have much of the information you need. Sometimes, the available information might not precisely satisfy an information need, but it could give data related to

it. Such information could well be adequate for the user's purpose.

*Step 4*  
**Identify Key Indicators**

Having considered the statistics you need for your case study and where to get them, you can now turn your attention to identifying, defining and calculating key indicators from the existing data. Choose the specific set of indicators that reflects the problems and questions identified earlier by the user, particularly those that are likely to have a differential impact on women and men.

**What are indicators?**

Indicators come from selecting, rearranging and otherwise manipulating basic data. In effect they summarise and focus statistical information. Their function is to show the most significant aspects of a situation. People can then use them to assess what is happening and make appropriate decisions. Indicators can usefully point to progress towards, or retreat from, desired goals. They can also provide signals for action. They can show differentials between population subgroups (for example, women and men, rural and urban populations) and how the differentials are changing over time.

Simple indicators consist of:

- summaries, arrays or selections of basic data such as:
  - proportions of a population with a given characteristic
  - rates of incidence or change
  - measures of severity
  - elapsed time
- means, medians and other measures of central tendency
- percentage distributions, frequency distributions

In identifying and compiling your set of indicators, bear in mind that indicators can sometimes be misleading. It is the responsibility of the statistician to specify their limitations and to explain the concepts underlying the statistics.

Following is a table which identifies the major information required in developing and analysing the indicators that ought to describe the inequality between women and men in the sharing of power and decision-making. It will be extremely useful if similar table is completed for the theme you have selected:



Indicators	Data Requirements	Data Sources and Years	Conceptual and Methodological limitations and problems
Ratio of women to men in parliamentary assemblies	Number of women and men in parliamentary assemblies	Election statistics, 1980, 1983 and the latest available year	
Ratio of women to men in government offices at highest levels - ministers - vice or assistant ministers - secretaries of state or permanent secretaries - deputy secretaries or directors of government departments	Number of women and women by level of ministry	Government directories and list of public officials 1980, 1985 and the latest available year	
Proportion of women in foreign affairs	Number of women and women Ambassadors	Foreign Ministry Directory, 1980, 1985 and the latest available year	
Percent distribution of employers and own account workers by sex	Number of women and women in that category of occupation	National Statistics Office, labour statistics and censuses	
Percent distribution of administrative and managerial workers by sex	Number of women and women in that category of occupation	National Statistics Office, labour statistics and censuses	

*Step 5*  
**Present the data**

Having selected and gathered together relevant data from the existing stock and applied enough analysis to draw out relevant information, the next step is to present the information in an interesting way. Your objective is to produce a statistical overview which deals with the key concerns and issues identified by the user.

This step is best completed by the statistician in consultation with the user. To make the overview interesting use simple tables, diagrams and descriptive commentary so that the user can see trends and patterns in the data. The aim is to make the statistical information relevant and accessible to the user. Bear in mind that statistical information presented in the traditional way, in detailed tables, is usually dull and difficult for non-statisticians to understand.

Present the overview so that it deals with the problems and issues identified by the user, placing them in their broader demographic, social and economic context. Obviously, your presentation should be impartial and objective. It is not the task of the statistician to become involved in policy advocacy and policy criticism.

It is important to make both the women's and men's world visible in presenting statistical material. Prejudice about women still exists in every country. Women are much more invisible than men, both in society and in statistics. And what we don't see, does not exist! Hence the need for facts showing the situation of women relative to men.

Whenever possible, present time series data so that readers can assess changes over time. Aim, whenever possible, to present comparisons at a regional level and between population subgroups. Often the picture at the national level is different from that at other levels of society.

Some examples of interesting, digestible presentations are provided below.

Figure 1

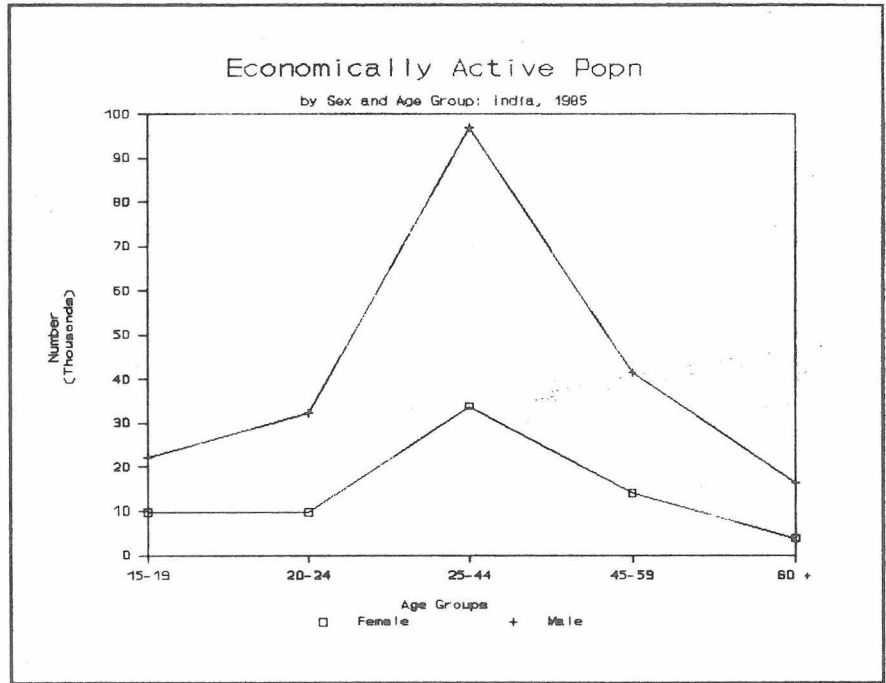
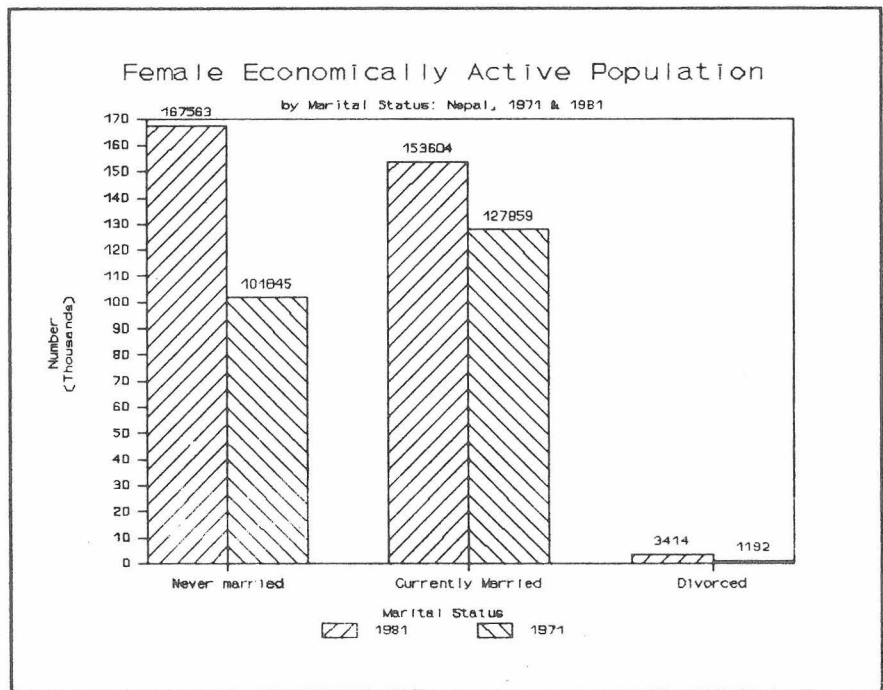


Figure 2



*Step 6*  
**Assess the Adequacy  
of Existing Data**

In this step in preparing your country paper, you evaluate the adequacy of existing statistical collections, based on your experience in steps 1 to 5. It might be useful if the statistician prepare separate evaluations from their different perspectives, meet to discuss them, and together develop strategy for improvement. Be prepared to discuss such strategies at the workshop.

You could consider the issue of adequacy under two main headings, namely:

- concepts, definitions, and classification systems, and
- data gaps.

Here are some questions that you may wish to consider in your evaluation:

- Are the concepts, definitions and classifications relevant to the issues that the user wants to address?
- Are the concepts, definitions and classifications consistent between collections and over time?
- Are the statistics accurate and up to date?
- Are they accessible to users?
- Are they presented in an easily understood way?
- Is all relevant collected information processed? If not, why not?
- Are the statistics frequent enough to meet the user's needs?
- Are the coverage and completeness of the collections suitable for the user's needs?

Your responses to questions like these should enable you to structure your evaluation around the key issue of making statistics more responsive to user needs.

*Step 7*  
**Prepare Country Paper**

In this last step you should together prepare an overview of the six steps you have worked through. Outline:

- the problem you have used as your case study,
- the information requirements,
- the available statistics, and
- the key indicators you have developed.

Include the statistical overview you have produced and an account of the gaps and inadequacies that you have identified in available statistics. This will be your draft "country paper" for the workshop in Osaka, Japan.

*Note:* The executive summary INSTRAW requires from you by 11 February is a one page version of this outline.

## **B. Review of the Issues and Recommendations in Improving Statistics and Indicators on Women in Asia:**

### **Background**

The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN INSTRAW) has launched a series of training workshops in different regions designed to promote a dialogue between producers and users of data and to improve the scope and quality of information available on women in different national data systems. The particular focus is on compilation of policy relevant statistics and indicators relating to women's contribution to national development.

This chapter provides a synthesis of the issues and recommendations that emanated from the training workshops on Statistics and Indicators on Women and Development in six Asian countries namely China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Participants (to the current workshop) from these six countries should review the issues and recommendations from these workshops, which are outlined in the following pages, and identify initiatives or changes established towards achieving the objectives defined.

### **Objectives**

The workshops addressed the most pressing training needs of:

1. Generating awareness among statistics to produce data that describe more accurately the differentials in the socioeconomic situations of males and females;
2. Increasing the sensitivity of planners to adopt policies and plans for the benefit of all segments of the population based on adequate analysis of the economic differentials within the society; and
3. Encouraging greater involvement of users of statistics in the processes of data collection and compilation.

### **Summary of the Recommendations**

Although some of the recommendations, particularly those falling under procedures, are country specific, majority are of considerable relevance across countries. Recommendations adopted by the workshops generally focused on developing a more widely acceptable system of collecting and analysing data



on women. Specifically, they may be grouped into three categories, namely, a) recommendations related to concepts, definitions, and classification, b) methodological and procedure issues, and c) data gaps or additional statistics needed to develop gender-specific indicators to better reflect women's situations and contributions.

### **Issues Related to Clarification of Concepts, Definitions and Classifications**

Paramount is the need to standardize concepts and definitions, first across a particular country's various data sources, e. g., census and sample surveys, and then across countries, for comparability and to be able to determine trends and changes in the situation of women over time. Specifically, clarifications are crucial on the following:

- a) *Work*. The term should be clearly defined to include all activities performed both within and outside the household which is to be viewed as both a production and a consumption unit. Therefore, "work" would include the following three categories: (i) work in relation to produce made for market purposes; (ii) work for barter such as for exchanging items within the neighborhood and (iii) work for home-consumption only.

The crucial question in most census questionnaires "Worked any time at all last year?" has caused serious problems in defining women's economic activities. This question should be replaced by one that is more sensitive to the actual situation of women, such as "In which of the following activities were you involved most?" and multiple-choice answers are recommended, which may include, transplanting, home gardening, weeding, selling produce at a fair, etc. This new question, however, should be carefully pre-tested and analyzed by research organizations and case studies especially commissioned to highlight the issue.

- b) *Employment*. A redefinition is needed to include the informal sector.
- c) *Unpaid family worker*. The term should be reviewed particularly in the context of the proposed definition for "work". A new definition that is put forward is "Those who

assist the household head in generating some economic output, such as farm crops, who worked for at least 15 hours during the reference week.

- d) *Own-account worker.* This term as usually defined does not cover many activities performed by women, such as agricultural operations, home gardening, brick-making, coconut picking, trading, etc. Hence, a definition of the informal sector and subsequent gender-specific classification should aim to yield most of the information on economic activities of women, which would otherwise be lost.
- e) *Housework.* The question of "valuation of housework" cannot be separated from the question of equity because of its implication to women's social status and their relative access to social services, unemployment benefits, and other resources. New and emerging concepts of "housework" should be utilized by development agencies and government departments in planning and implementing programmes for women.
- f) *Household.* In economic and social service theory, the household is regarded as an undifferentiated consumption unit. This concept should be changed to reflect the household as an arena of activity, and the present classification of household and families need to be improved and standardized to adequately portray the status and role of women.
- g) *Household head.* Further studies need to be undertaken on this concept in order to determine the criteria for household headship as opposed to the limited and traditional notion which normally/usually reflects the oldest male member as the head of household.
- h) *Usual place of residence.* The inadequacy of the term in measuring extent of internal and external migration needs clarification. Further probing may be necessary to elicit relevant information.

Definitions utilized at national level should be further refined to suit local needs and later aggregated to maintain international comparability.

New classification systems, such as the International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO), International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), and

International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), need to be evolved to take into account new and emerging concepts and definitions.

1) A classification system listing the kind of employment possible in the "informal sector" and "own account" status should be made. In further exploring conceptual categorizations of the informal sector, the workshop in Indonesia raised three possible conceptual frameworks:

- a) *The concept of Dichotomy (polarization)*: formal and informal sectors are conceptualized as two conflicting activities.
- b) *The concept of Transitory (temporary)*: the informal sector is a transitory stage towards future formal sector.
- c) *The concept of Structural-Exploitation*: the informal sector is dependent upon the formal sector in terms of definition and existence.

2) With reference to unemployed women for a specific reference period, a breakdown according to the following classification should be included:

- i) those actively seeking work,
- ii) those who are available for work,
- iii) discouraged workers, and
- iv) those not economically active.

The earnings of household servants or domestic helpers, majority of whom are female, have not been imputed into the household income. Consequently, their earnings are not accounted for in the GNP. It was recommended that other approaches to overcome this weakness in data collection must be utilized so that the contribution of the household servants' income can be reflected in the system of national accounts.

For purposes of comparability and continuity, the building block approach should be adopted when new concepts, definitions, and data collection techniques are used.

Below are specific recommendations related to concepts and definitions that are addressed to international and regional level agencies, respectively

## **International level**

- (i) Before the revision of the System of National Accounts is completed, the work undertaken to define boundaries between productive and non-productive work of the non-economic activities of women should be disseminated. INSTRAW and other UN agencies, should also make statistics and indicators on women accessible to national agencies for their comparability analyses and researches.
- (ii) In the revision of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) and International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), the national agencies should also be involved. Similarly in the formulation of indicators.
- (iii) INSTRAW and other relevant international organizations such as the UN Statistical Division and the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) should further encourage and support national studies and research, particularly, to test the application of new concepts and notions developed at the international level.
- (iv) The new methodologies and concepts being developed at the international level including on the informal sector, the revision of ISCO and ISIC should be widely distributed to national agencies, NGOs, women's organizations, universities and research institutions.
- (v) INSTRAW and ESCAP should undertake training of trainers, seminars and workshops to disseminate new concepts and methodologies at the international and regional level to make data and indicators internationally and regionally comparable.
- (vi) INSTRAW should consolidate results and/or recommendations from different national workshops conducted and disseminate results to national agencies. While some amount of comparability can be brought about, the regional variations and experiences too have to be highlighted.

## **Regional level**

- (i) ESCAP should play a larger role in the dissemination and promotion in the countries of the region of the new and broader concepts developed for the measurement of women's contribution to the process of development.

- (ii) ESCAP, through its regional advisory service, should strengthen the implementation of concepts and definitions that would improve the measurement on women's contribution to development.
- (iii) ESCAP should assist national statistical offices of the region to undertake methodological studies aimed at improving the measurement of women's contribution to development.

### **Methodological and procedural Issues**

This section puts together two groups of related recommendations: the first tackles the technical aspects of methodologies while the second deals with the less technical or procedural arrangements that need to be put in place in order to institutionalize the systematic collection, analysis and reporting of statistics and indicators on gender and development.

#### **Methodological Issues**

1. New questions to clarify concepts and definitions should be pre-tested by research organizations in coordination with national agencies and academic institutions, or in-depth case studies must be especially commissioned to highlight the new concepts. Also, they might be influenced to explore and utilize alternative data collection, processing and presentation approaches. Micro or pilot studies, qualitative techniques, time-use studies, life histories, and oral histories were some of the identified alternatives.
2. In order to specify in detail the most appropriate questions including the activities that could be recommended to official data collection agencies, special studies need to be undertaken to highlight the following:
  - a) issues of concern in data gathering
  - b) indicators or statistical analyses necessary for addressing gender
  - c) data required to carry out the statistical analysis
  - d) availability/non-availability of such data

3. Terminologies used in data collection forms should be carefully reviewed and due consideration given to the importance of how the questions are formulated and sequenced. There is need for continuous dialogue between producers and users of data at the questionnaire design stage and at tabulation stage, rather than the links now being maintained through requests, by mail for comments on questionnaires addressed to some of the data users. Regular meetings should also be held to review data availability, accessibility and dissemination.

4. Efforts should be exerted to valorize women's work in the house and to report such estimates on a continuing basis. In this connection, time budget allocation surveys/studies should be undertaken by relevant national government organizations and should cover men, women, and children and must have better focus on gender relations in the household level and in society.

5. Although time allocation methods have been employed to estimate women's economic productivity, there are still difficulties in data collections and analysis due to the unclear definition of what constitute women's economic productivity. Therefore, explorations on defining more precisely women's economic productivity are needed. Recommended were the following:

- a) to pose questions during interviews on more concrete level and leaving the classifications up to the researchers.
- b) to use more women enumerators.
- c) to accommodate the respondents' time for conducting interviews.
- d) case study approach should bear relevance to macro data analysis.

6. Special micro-level surveys should be undertaken and appropriate methodologies developed for topics which are not generally covered in censuses and household surveys such as to measure activities of women in the informal sector or to evaluate the usefulness of new concepts and definitions regarding women's contribution in this sector, and such other topics as nutrition, utilization of leisure time, etc. Data from sample surveys and micro-studies should be reported in as much detail as possible, including definitions and methodology employed, so that the users can have a better understanding of

the material collected. Relatedly, it was recommended that meetings among researchers conducting macro and micro studies should be intensified to develop better professionalism, interdisciplinary view, and to enhance communication so as to bridge the conceptual gaps between the two types of approaches.

7. In general, more dynamic (inter-temporal) issues cannot be tackled within the national sample survey framework. In this cases, longitudinal surveys of other reliable research organizations were considered ideal.

8. Selection of respondents should not be based on stereotypes. For example, inquiries on health, nutrition and family planning programmes are focused on women and labour force surveys are generally directed to men.

9. The importance of training/re-training census enumerators and related activities thereto was repeatedly emphasized. In this connection, several concerns were raised:

- a) Because of the perceived inconsistency in census enumeration and processing of the responses of females and males on the question concerning principal activity, a module on "women's work" has been recommended for introduction in the training of trainers of census enumerators. In this connection, it was stressed that dialogues with appropriate groups outside the census machinery need to be conducted in order to refine the definitions of gender-biased words like farmer, home maker, housewife, etc.
- b) Training of enumerators should take into consideration the fact that the respondent, the household head, usually a male, provides the information for the women in the household as well as other members. Even when the woman fills up the form, she very often consults the husband.

Enumerators must be trained to get as much information as possible from the women themselves.

- c) In formulating questionnaires, in preparing training materials, and in the conduct of the training itself, emphasis should be laid on avoiding inadvertent use of sexist



language in order to obtain more precise and accurate information from the respondents.

### **Procedural Issues**

1. A task force or special committee to develop guidelines for standardizing indicators on WID needs to be created. These guidelines should cover all definitions, concepts, and measurements related to WID and should be published and made available to researchers, policy makers, planners, and organizations involved in WID.

2. Recognizing the role of central statistics agencies in providing the national data base for policies and programmes, national agencies for women should have a "cell" in their respective Census and Statistics Offices for greater coordination of Programmes of data collection relating to women.

3. Well formulated country-wide media campaigns need to be mounted to create awareness about women's work and their multiple roles. At the same time, this should make women more aware of the consequences of biased reporting of their work. This effort should be part of a continuing education about the existing inequalities, an effort which can best be systematically addressed by the schools. Likewise, national agencies for women should undertake advocacy or short-term sensitization programmes for key groups of decision-makers and program implementors on the utilization of gender-differentiated data and indicators in the design and implementation of their programmes.

4. Depending on available funding, governments may, either launch a special round on women's activities, or add a block in the present questionnaires in order to draw special focus on women's activity patterns, both in rural and in urban areas.

### **Additional Statistics and Data Requirements for Gender-specific Indicators**

1. The importance of collecting additional data to measure women's economic contributions was repeatedly emphasized. These include the following:



- a) Women in the informal sector. Because a great majority of women are engaged in activities falling under the informal sector, priority should be given to collection of data and development of appropriate methodologies to measure the extent of their participation and contribution in this sector.
- b) Income levels and individual ownership of property by gender. The following gender-specific information ought to be captured in the census or surveys:
  - (i) Gender-specific ownership of assets, land, and house
  - (ii) Investments made by males and females
  - (iii) Savings of males and females
  - (iv) Foreign earnings by sex: remittances made by those who earn incomes abroad are to be recorded in the name of the particular individual and not as the income of the household.
- c) For external migration, statistics collected from embarkation cards should be computerized so that further analysis on gender-specific issues may be obtained.

2. On the social aspect of the situation of women.

- a) *Education.* Gender-specific information on reasons for leaving school should be collected among school drop-outs. Relatedly, data should be collected to ascertain the differences in school admission requirements, specially technical schools, and recruitment and actual benefits provided to women and men in industry and occupation.
- b) *Skills level.* To elicit information on the skills of women (other than their normal educational achievements), a question such as "Have you received any special vocational training to enable you to do some work?" should be included in household surveys.
- c) *Health indicators.* Recommended alternative health indicators should include the following:

- (i) Health structures
  - Number of hospitals and hospital beds available to women
  - Number of dispensaries, rural health centers, etc., per 1000 Population
- (ii) Health manpower and training - Doctors per 1000 population - Lady health visitors per 1000 population - Nurses per 1000 population - Midwives per 1000 population - Paramedics per 1000 population - Medical education and training facilities available for females
- (iii) Access to and utilization of health facilities
  - number of trained personnel and location of health centers
  - Proportion of funds for medicines out of the total funding for health services
  - Ratio of maternity beds to number of deliveries.
- (iv) Health expenditure on women
- (v) Direct health indicators
  - Maternal mortality by age of mother and by parity
  - Prenatal care
  - Disease pattern
  - Health by cause
  - Daily calorie intake particularly among pregnant and lactating women. Proportion of mentally/emotionally disturbed persons among the total number of patients by sex.
- d) The election reports should publish the voting participation by gender. Relatedly, women's participation in political and voluntary organizations need to be measured.

3. Because of special problems affecting specific vulnerable groups of women, data need to be collected on the following:

- a) women overseas migrant workers and their families
- b) women left behind by male migrants
- c) women workers in the free trade zones
- d) home-based women workers and self-employed in the poor income groups

- e) slum and shanty dwellers
- f) male and female prostitutes
- g) beggars and street families
- h) refugees
- i) single parent families
- j) female heads of households
- k) disabled persons
- l) sweat-shop workers
- m) women victims of violence (domestic violence, rape, incest, sexual harassment on the job)
- n) night shift workers
- o) domestic servants
- p) adolescent children, their burden, education, health and nutrition
- q) women members of cultural communities

4. With the increasing labour force participation of women, data on the availability of kindergarten and child-care centers, and services for the care of the elderly should be collected.

5. New data on women may be generated by introducing some modifications in the existing format or survey schedules. As an illustration, the workshop in India considered two items in its household schedule of 1981 census which deals with basic amenities available to the household. For example, in addition to asking a question on source of drinking water, further information could be captured by asking "Who mostly fetches drinking water?" The responses to this new question then could be classified into male/female adults and male/female children. A clearer perception of women's multiple activities and energy consumption would likewise emerge if the distance or time criterion is introduced at the same time by another question on "distance travelled" or alternatively, "time spent" on collecting water.

6. Data requirements of macro policy impact studies to determine the gender-differentiated of such policies as agricultural modernization, shifts in industrialization, mechanization of certain industries, etc., need to be given priority.

7. Some of the more basic variables that must be collected and processed by sex should include:

- a) family income
- b) educational attainment of family members
- c) skill levels
- d) economic activities and participation rates
- e) age of the women
- f) number and age of children
- g) dependency ratio
- h) food stamp recipients
- i) indicators of housing conditions
  - square area of house per person
  - water supply and sanitation facilities: type of toilet
- j) district of origin
  - for internal migrants, current residence and years of stay
  - for overseas workers, duration of stay abroad
- k) ethnic group
- l) religion
- m) mortality and morbidity rates
- n) marital status; divorce proceedings initiated by women: reasons for divorce
- o) family planning practice
- p) child/elderly care arrangements; pension benefits
- q) occupational hazards; labor protection schemes
- r) income by number of hours worked
- s) night workers
- t) incidence of absenteeism
- u) health and welfare facilities
- v) amount and frequency of remittances to family
- w) access to credit facilities
- x) investments and savings
- y) indebtedness (amount and source)
- z) proportions of female-headed and male-headed households for the appropriate groups

## C. Key National Indicators for the Fourth World Conference on Women

The purpose of this exercise is two-fold. First, to acquaint users and producers of data on gender specific indicators and address pertinent issues and problems, and second, to establish ways of providing technical assistance to countries in the preparation of their national reports for the Conference, which is to be held in Beijing, China, in September 1995.

The United Nations Secretariat for the Fourth World Conference on women has developed a set of basic guidelines for the preparation of national reports for the Conference. Eight "critical areas of concern" for future action were selected and defined in the guidelines together with a core set of indicators.

Part of the pre-workshop exercises for the participants to the Osaka Workshop is to review the set of indicators defined in the guidelines and identify issues and problems that must be addressed when compiling and analyzing such indicators. Do these indicators sufficiently and fairly describe the actual status of women and men under each theme? Are statistical information available to develop these indicators? If not, identify alternative indicators and data sources. What are the conceptual and methodological problems encountered in compiling such indicators?

Participants are encouraged to identify and consult with the organizations/agencies or individuals directly involved in the preparation of the national reports for the Conference in reviewing these indicators. Results of this consultation must be presented at the workshop particularly during the relevant working group sessions.

The statistical and other indicators used in the national reports should be those that permit examination of the situation of women in terms of the critical areas of concern. They should also show the changes that have occurred, but comparing situations at different points. The comparison points that are suggested include 1980 (the mid-point of the United Nations Decade for Women and the Copenhagen Conference), 1985 (the end of the United Nations Decade for Women and the Nairobi Conference), 1990 (the year of the first review and

appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies) and the most recent date for which statistics are available. These dates need not be exact, and data that were obtained close to those dates can also be used (e.g. 1979 or 1981 would do for a 1980 comparison).

Following is the set of themes and core indicators proposed to be highlighted in the national reports.

## Key Indicators

### 1. Inequality in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels

Women by virtue of their gender, experience discrimination in terms of denial of equal access to the power structure that control society and determines development issues and peace initiatives. This discrimination promotes an uneconomic use of women's talents and wastes the valuable human resources necessary for development and for the strengthening of peace. Women need to be involved in order to bring their interests and aspirations into the societal agenda.

The indicators listed below can show the level and the evolution of women's and men's participation in political and economic decision-making bodies.

## Indicators

- Participation in parliamentary assemblies:  
Number of women and men.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Election statistics, usually maintained by Central Electoral Boards or similar institutions.
- Participation in Government (highest levels; e.g. ministers, deputy, vice- or assistant ministers, secretaries of state or permanent secretaries, deputy secretaries or directors of Government Departments):  
Number of women and men.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Government directories or lists of public officials (requires counting by level, sex and ministries grouped by type, e.g. prime ministry, economic, social, legal, defense and foreign affairs).
- Participation in foreign affairs:  
Number of women and men ambassadors.

1980, 1985 and the latest available year.

Sources: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- Participation in local representative bodies (highest levels in municipalities or state legislatures e.g. mayor, state legislator, municipal council person):  
Number of women and men.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Lists of public officials or Central Electoral Boards.
- Employers and own account workers (indicator of women as economic decision-makers in the private sector):  
Number of women and men in that category of occupation.

1980, 1985 and the latest available year.

Sources: National statistical office from national labour statistics or national censuses.

- Administrative and managerial workers (indicator of women in decision-making in the labour force):  
Number of women and men in that type of occupation.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: National statistical office from national labour statistics or national censuses.
- Proprietors in business establishments (indicator on women as economic decision-makers in the private sector):  
Number of business establishments registered to women, to men or jointly.  
1985, current year (1993).  
Sources: Industrial statistics and/or commercial registries.

## **2. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women**

Appropriate governmental machinery needs to be established at a high level and endowed with adequate resources, commitment and authority to advise on the impact on women of all government policies. To be effective, such machinery should disseminate information to women on their rights and entitlements, collaborate with various ministries and other government agencies and with non-governmental organizations.

The indicators listed below can show the evolution of general and specific institutional arrangements for the advancement of women, at the governmental and non-governmental levels as well as at the national, sub-national and local levels.

## Indicators

- National machinery at the national, sub-national (state or province or region) and local levels (indicating the institutional existence, outreach and resource levels for it)

Existence and form (e.g. ministry, office, non-governmental organization), status within Governmental structure, mandate and percentage of national budget allocated. 1980, 1985 and 1993. Sources: Government budget documents and information provided by the national machinery for the advancement of women.

- Focal points for advancement of women in technical ministries (indicating the extent to which a coordinating mechanism has been set up and its level in decision-making terms)

Existence, level of decision - making and mandate. 1980, 1985 and 1993.

Sources: Ministries.

- Non-governmental organizations for the advancement of women at the national and sub-national levels (indicating the extent to which these organizations are working in the country)

Number and principal areas of activities. 1980, 1985 and the latest available year.

Sources: Non-governmental organizations themselves or national machinery for advancement of women if they keep lists of non-governmental organizations.

### **3. Lack of awareness of, and commitment to, internationally and nationally recognized women's rights**

The United Nations system has worked for four decades to establish international standards to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex. Although much progress has been made in ensuring that the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and of other international instruments lead to legislative



changes, measures are necessary for effective implementation and enforcement.

In some countries, discriminatory legislative provisions still exist, including civil, penal and commercial codes and certain administrative rules and regulations. The indicators listed below can show us the evolution of the legal basis for *de jure* equality of women and men. The elimination of *de facto* discrimination requires as a fundamental step the dissemination of information on women's rights. For the most part, these indicators are qualitative.

## Indicators

- Main legal instruments for women's rights (description of the main legislative provisions guaranteeing women's rights, including constitutions, equal opportunity laws, whether the country has ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and whether this has been without reservations. The analysis should indicate when this took place, in terms of the comparison dates.  
Sources: Parliament or/and Ministry of Justice or/and National machinery for the advancement of women.
- Main measures taken to increase awareness among women and men of women's rights. This should indicate whether there are active efforts to inform women and men about rights and efforts to make it easier to exercise those rights. These might include the existence of information campaigns, efforts to make the judiciary more accessible, the creation of ombudspersons or other institutional arrangements to implement anti-discrimination laws. It can also include efforts in the education system, such as adding human rights to the school curriculum and changing textbooks. The comparison dates could enable tracing the evolution of these efforts. Sources: National machinery for the advancement of women.

## 4. Poverty

It is widely assumed that the burden of poverty falls disproportionately on women and that in many circumstances those women are heads of households with children. It has also been found that women's experience of poverty is different and more acute than that of men because of gender-based forms of

discrimination. The burden that women in poverty carry forces them to transfer part of their workload to other women, such as daughters, mothers or sisters.) This has, in most cases, serious implications for the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

Poverty is experienced mostly by households. While there are a number of traditional indicators of poverty, based on the ability of the household to purchase a defined "basket of goods", these figures are not always available. If such figures are available, they should be used, but they may not distinguish by sex. Bearing in mind the close association between female headship and low incomes, the proportion of women-headed households and the change in this over time, is considered one of the best indicators of poverty. Another approach is to examine whether programmes and facilities exist that would provide means by which women could escape from poverty. This constitutes the basis for the other proposed set of indicators: the existence of programmes, services and facilities that could ease women's double burden.

#### Indicators

- Women-headed households (usually an indicator that the household has no more than one major income earner and therefore at risk of poverty)  
Percentage of households headed by women  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year  
Sources: National statistical office from national censuses or from specific population surveys.
- Urban unemployment (indicating whether unemployment and its consequent income reduction affects women more than men)  
Percentage of women and men unemployed in urban areas  
1980 and the latest available year.  
Sources: National census, labour force surveys, unemployment office statistics.
- Public day care centers for children (indicating whether alternative, public-supported facilities exist that can allow a woman with children to hold a job)  
Number of centers (nurseries and kindergartens), by rural/urban area.

1980, 1985 and the latest available year.

Sources: Statistics on education, specific surveys, health surveys.

- Vocational training (indicating whether job training exists for women and men on an equal basis  
Number of students, by sex and by field of study.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year  
Sources: Ministry of Education or Labour.

### **5. Inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and the productive process itself**

As a result of cultural, institutional, behavioural and attitudinal discrimination, women worldwide suffer a lack of access to land, capital and other productive resources. This gender bias makes women absent from most making policies bodies which have an impact on development agenda. It also has an impact on poverty. There are few standard indicators of access that would normally be classified by sex. However, by a relatively simple study of existing records using sampling, estimates can be obtained which could indicate the degree of inequality present.<sup>2/</sup>

#### **Indicators**

- Credit in public banks (indicating the extent to which women have access to publicly-provided or guaranteed credit)  
Number of public loans granted to women, to men and jointly (man and woman in a household)  
To the extent possible, the loans should be divided between rural and non-rural.  
Current year (1993)  
Sources: National public banks (sample of persons to whom loans were granted)

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<sup>2/</sup> If the data are too cumbersome to collect for an entire year or for the entire country, samples should be used; e.g. registration of urban properties during the month of January 1993 in the capital selected, large, medium, small cities. If possible, the same should be done for a previous year in order to compare the change over the time.

- Rural land-ownership (indicating whether there is access by women to land-owning) Number of rural properties registered, by sex  
During the current year (1993).  
(If possible the average area registered by women and men should be compared).  
Sources: National land registry (sample of titles registered) and/or Ministry of Agriculture/ Rural development (sample of titles or data from most recent agricultural census).
- Real estate tenure in urban areas (indicating whether women have access to urban property)  
Number of urban properties registered by women, by men and jointly (woman and man in a single household).  
During the current year (1993)  
Sources: National registry of deeds or registry in the largest cities (sample of registrations)

#### **6. Inequality in access to education, health, employment and other means to maximize awareness of rights and the use of their capacities**

To achieve the goal of *de facto* equality of women and men special efforts should be made in order to increase the status of women. Access to education, health services and to income-generating activities in the formal and informal sector, are the basic factors to reach it. For women, they represent the principal means for their self-empowerment. For the society, they represent an investment in human resources with very high level of returns. The indicators listed below under the chapters on education, health and employment can show us the investment gap between women and men, girls and boys and their evolution over the time. Most are standard statistical indicators routinely collected and presented by national statistical authorities.

#### **Indicators**

#### **Education**

- Illiteracy (indicating the extent to which past discrimination in educational access is reflected in present inability to read and write)

Percentage of women, of men illiterates (by age group)  
15-24 years; 25-44 years; over 45 years 1980, 1985 and the  
latest available year.

Source: National census and/or specific surveys and/or  
Ministry of Education.

- Enrollment ratio (indicating to what extent girls and boys  
are able to start school on a equal basis)  
First level enrollment ratio by sex  
Second level enrollment ratio by sex  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year  
Sources: Ministry of Education, often reported to national  
statistical offices.
- Schooling completed (indicating the extent to which girls  
and boys complete schooling on an equal basis)  
Number of boys and girls receiving diplomas from or  
otherwise completing first and second levels of education.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year  
Sources: Ministry of Education.
- Graduation in third level (indicating whether boys and girls  
have equal access to entry-level jobs in the professional and  
managerial levels)  
Number of boys and girls graduated, by field of study  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Ministry of Education.
- Technical graduation (indicating the extent to which  
women have equal access to non-traditional fields)  
Number of women and men graduating with an engineering  
degree or diploma  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Ministry of Education.
- Teachers (indicating the extent to which women participate  
among those teaching)  
Number of women and men teaching at 1st, 2nd and 3rd  
levels.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available  
Sources: Ministry of Education

## Health

- Life expectancy at birth (indicating the probable life span of a person born in a given year, which summarizes all of the factors influencing life span)  
Life expectancy for women, for men.  
1980 and the latest available year  
Sources: National statistical service.
- Maternal mortality per 100.000 births  
1980 and the latest available year\*  
Sources: National statistical service or Ministry of Health.
- Infant mortality rate Annual number of deaths of male and female infants (under one year of age) per 1000 live births  
1980 and the latest available year  
Sources: National statistical service or Ministry of Health.
- Child mortality per 1000:  
Mortality rate for boys, for girls aged from 1 to 4 years.  
1980 and the latest available year\*  
Sources: National statistical service or Ministry of Health.
- Total fertility rate:  
1980 and the latest available year.  
Sources: National statistical service.
- Percentage of women using contraceptives:  
The proportion of women of childbearing age (15-49) currently using contraceptives, either traditional or modern.  
1980 and the latest available year\*.  
Sources: Ministry of Health or specific survey, e.g..  
Demographic and health Surveys.
- Prevalence of anemia:  
Percentage of women aged 15-49 with hemoglobin levels below 12 grams/dl for non-pregnant women and 11 grams/dl for pregnant women.  
1980 and the latest available year\*.  
Sources: Ministry of Health or specific surveys.
- Malnutrition in children under five years of age:  
Percentage of girls, of boys with mild - moderate/severe malnutrition.

1980 and the latest available years.  
Sources: Ministry of health or specific surveys.

- Sex-differentials in immunization rates:  
Percentage of girls and boys one year of age fully immunized (TB, DPT, Polio and Measles).  
1980 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Ministry of Health.
- Percent of pregnant women fully immunized against tetanus (TT2 or Booster):  
1980 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Ministry of Health.
- Service availability:  
Percentage of births attended by trained personnel (doctor or the person with - midwifery skills). 1980 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Ministry of health.
- HIV positive women:  
Percentage of women, by age group, found HIV positive in maternity clinics/wards (specify geographic area covered).  
The most recent five years\*.  
Sources: National AIDS Programme or Ministry of Health.

### **Employment**

- Economically active population:  
Percentage of women and men in each sector of activity (primary, secondary and tertiary). 1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: National census and/or labour surveys.
- Characteristics of employment:  
Percentage of women and men in part-time employment.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: National census or labour surveys.

### **7. Violence against women**

Violence against women exists in all regions, classes and cultures. Physical violence against women, which derives from their unequal status in society, has been acknowledged as

hindering their full integration and equal participation in the society. This issue has grown in importance in the last few years and has been considered at numerous national and international meetings. The indicators listed below are primarily qualitative and show which policies and measures the government and other agencies are being undertaken to prevent, control and reduce the impact of violence on women.

### **Indicators**

- Specific measures taken to ensure the elimination of violence against women in all its forms:  
Legal measures, national plans of action, training to sensitize law enforcement officers and public officials. If a comparison is desired, it could be based on whether these measures were in place in 1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Parliamentary or / and Ministry of Justice or / and National machinery for the advancement of women.
- Protective measures taken to assist abused women: Number of public shelters, shelters sponsored by non-governmental organizations' shelters and other services (including an indication of how many persons were attended). 1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Social statistics or specific surveys.
- Women in the Judicial System (indicating the extent that women, who are usually more understanding of violence against women, are found in decision-making positions) Number and percentage of women and men at the professional level (judges, lawyers, prosecutors and attorneys). 1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Ministry of Justice or of Interior.
- Women in police forces (indicating the extent that women, who tend to be more understanding of the problem of violence, are available in the forces): Percentage of women. 1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Ministry of Interior.

### **8. Effects on women of continuing national and international armed or other kinds of conflicts**

The international community recognizes a humanitarian responsibility to protect and assist refugees and displaced



persons. In most cases, the affected are women and children exposed to a variety of difficult situations. There are few indicators about the affected population, either in the countries where the conflicts occur, the countries receiving or assisting refugees or among the international agencies involved. If figures are available in countries experiencing armed conflicts about the proportion of women among refugees and displaced, these should be reported. One indicator, however, of a probable understanding of the extent to which armed conflict is seen as a male issue is the extent to which women are included in national military formations. The existence of a high proportion of women would probably mean that those formations would be more sensitive to gender violence.

**Indicator**

- Women in the military:  
Percentage of women in the armed forces.  
1980, 1985 and the latest available year.  
Sources: Ministries of Defense

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\*/ If the data are too cumbersome to collect for an entire year or for the entire country, samples should be used; e.g., registration of these data during any month in the capital and selected, large, medium, small cities. If possible, the same should be done for the previous years in order to compare the change over the time.

## 4. Compiling Indicators on the Situation of Women

This section provides additional information on statistical indicators that could be helpful in the preparation of your country paper and in completing the other two exercises.

### The Problem

Given the existing social and economic statistics, the problem becomes one of selecting indicators which are valid and reliable and also have broad applicability and wide appeal. There are different ways of selecting such indicators. One approach is the derivation of indicators in the various areas for which there is regular reporting, that is, labour force, education and so on.

### Illustrative Indicators

It is necessary to keep the number of indicators within a manageable limit and yet not make the initial effort result in such a small list that it is not useable. In addition, the available current data in many developing countries limits the range of indicators for which bench-mark data are available.

In considering which indicators might be identified as principal indicators, it is necessary to examine the key problem areas with respect to the situation of women. This raises substantive questions related to the hypothesis that women and men are affected differently by their social and economic environments and the assumption that a major goal in most societies is to move towards equality of the sexes with respect to social and economic situations. Among these questions are the following:

- What are the critical problems with respect to women's situation in individual countries? What changes are most likely to occur in these areas during the overall transformation of societies (in, for example, education and training, labour-force status)?
- To what extent do women's needs for various services and types of employment differ from men's?

- What is the comparative situation of women within countries by ethnic group, by socio-economic group and by urban and rural residence?
- In what ways does the sexual division of labour or rights and duties over the means of livelihood affect women?

### **Importance of Indicators**

The answers to these questions help to determine which specific indicators are more important than others. The questions themselves suggest that indicators will be derived from statistics describing economic activities, education and literacy, marital status and households, and basic population data by sex and age. The data for such indicators already exist in many countries in censuses, surveys and vital registration or other administrative registration and record systems.

First and foremost, it is important to note that no single source can provide all of the data needed by different countries and by different users within those countries to describe the situation of women. There are three types of official national sources of basic data on women: Censuses of population and housing, sample surveys of the population and registration and administrative data systems. Although each of these major data sources has advantages and limitations, they must be seen as complementary in order to be used most effectively. Used in concert, they provide a considerable amount of data for indicators needed for planning, administration and research.

### **Censuses**

Population and housing censuses are probably the most comprehensive source of social and economic data needed for indicators in most countries. They provide universal coverage and a wide variety of data is collected to describe the size and characteristics of the population at specified intervals. Thus a broad range of possibilities exists for cross-classification of census data geographically and according to selected demographic, social and economic characteristics. Because population censuses are relatively infrequent, however, the data become outdated. Also, such large bodies of data are expensive to manipulate. Nonetheless, for most countries, censuses provide the starting point for meeting data requirements and for experimentation in the construction of social indicators.

## **Surveys**

Sample surveys of the population provide a basis for updating census information for the nation as a whole and for some broad geographical areas. They are extremely flexible data sources and provide a comprehensive source of social and economic data between censuses. Almost any subject can be explored and many countries have developed extensive survey capabilities. There are many types of household surveys and each type has advantages and disadvantages. They all sample a small part of the entire population to obtain needed and timely information on topics as diverse as unemployment and energy use. Because the information is collected from a relatively small sample, it is generally not possible to obtain detailed cross-tabulation of social and economic data by small geographical areas.

## **Records**

Another potential data source is registration and administrative record systems. These include civil registration of births, deaths, marriages and divorces. Unfortunately, although these sources are of great importance to women, they are often limited in content and coverage.

## **Complementary Relationships**

It is important to reiterate that the relationship between the three major sources of data is complementary. The relationship between population and housing censuses on the one hand and population surveys on the other, is one between infrequent but geographically detailed cross-section data and more frequent but less geographically detailed data provided by sample surveys. They are complementary in other ways also. the census may cover a broad range of topics, but most are covered in only a brief fashion. These same topics may be examined in much greater detail in survey. For example, labour-force status and occupation may be covered in a census, but additional items such as skills, hours worked, secondary occupations and the like may be covered in a survey. Sample household surveys also provide a mechanism for collecting data quickly -for example, in response to the energy crisis and for studying voting patterns associated with civil rights or human rights legislation. Adequate survey design, in turn, usually dependent on the detailed population and ho maps and other material obtained through a census.

In short, the three major data sources (and collection methods) must be seen as reasonably well-defined processes with

distinctive though overlapping characteristics with respect to content, detail, accuracy and timeliness of the data they generate. They are complementary and no one of them alone is the best or most adequate source of data for indicators on the situation of women. Some indication of the relative strengths and weaknesses of censuses surveys, and civil registration and administrative records in terms of seven specified criteria is provided in Table 1. The table suggests that the relative advantages of the three basic sources are complementary: where one is strong, another is weak. Attention and resources must be directed towards upgrading census, registration and survey capabilities, especially in developing countries, if the needs of all users of statistics on women are to be served.

Source:  
DIESA/INSTRAW (1988)  
*Compiling Social Indicators on the Situation of Women.*  
Santo Domingo: INSTRAW.

**Table 1:** characteristics of three basic sources of data for indicators on the situation of women

Criteria	Data Collection Method		
	Census	Civil Registration	Sample Survey
Tropical detail (richness and diversity of subject matter) Moderate	Moderate	Weak	
Accuracy Moderate	Moderate	Strong	
Precision (absence of sampling errors)	Strong	Strong	Weak
Timelines of data	Weak	Strong	Strong
Geographical detail	Strong	Strong	Weak
Information on population segment	Strong	-	Strong
Ease of organisation in a developing nation	Moderate	Weak	Strong

## 5. Sources of Basic Data

This section provides additional information on the sources introduced in Section 4

### **Developed Countries**

The sources of basic data on women vary widely. In the developed countries basic data sources include censuses, surveys, civil registration data and other administrative records which can provide various indicators on a more or less regular basis. In addition, many developed nations have specialised household surveys which periodically focus exclusively on living conditions.

### **Developing Countries**

In most developing countries, on the other hand, the basic data sources for social indicators are very limited. There may be a wide range of statistical experience in these countries but very few have long histories of population and housing censuses or reliable civil registration systems. Nor do they very often have extensive household survey programmes. In many cases, therefore, considerable upgrading and extension of basic data in the social fields are needed before a full range of useful social indicators can be developed. It may also be necessary to consider interim priority indicators from among different sources of data. In some countries administrative data or local community data may be the only feasible source of information at present, even though statistics collected and compiled by the national statistics system would be a preferable source. Mention should also be made of the array of techniques now available for preparing estimates from inadequate basic data, particularly in the demographic field. However, as these techniques are highly specialised, they will not be discussed here in detail

### **Statistical Services**

A variety of activities carried out by national statistical services provide data on selected aspects of the situation of women. In this section the sources of information on the situation of women which can be used to develop indicators are reviewed. The types of data which are usually available will be described along with some discussion of coverage and accuracy.

In addition, some suggestions are made for slight modifications which might permit a better description of the situation of women. It should be noted that this report focuses on official national data collection systems. It does not discuss indicators which might be drawn from specialised case studies and surveys which focus on particular cultural, socioeconomic or regional populations. Such studies can and have provided a substantial amount of information on different aspects of the situation of women. They are usually small-scale endeavours in local areas, however, and the results cannot be generalised to the country as a whole. They are not, therefore, reviewed in detail in the present report because the emphasis is on indicators which can be developed from national data systems.

## Censuses

Censuses of population and housing are probably the best source of information on the size and distribution of the female population (and also of the total population) by a variety of social and economic characteristics. The major unique features of census data in most countries are the availability of small-area data and comparability across countries. It is necessary to point out two characteristics of population censuses. First, the primary statistical unit in the population census is the individual. Therefore information on education, income and the like may be obtained for all persons cross-classified as desired and comparisons made among significant age and sex groups. Second, although topics recommended for the 1970 and 1980 rounds of censuses are very similar, the international recommendations issued in 1980 give much more flexibility to regions and countries in the choice of topics. Whereas in 1970 both "priority" topics and "other useful" topics were considered in detail in the international recommendations, in 1980 the selection, definition and application of "other useful" topics were left to each region and country. The principal topics in the 1980 global recommendations which appear relevant to the purposes of this paper include the following:

- place of residence,
- relationship to head or other reference person in the household,
- sex,
- age,
- marital status,
- educational attainment and attendance,



- economic activity,
- occupation,
- industry, and
- status in employment.

Two additional topics which are reviewed in the global recommendations but which were not included in the majority of regional recommendations are income and sector of employment.

The topics noted suggest that it is possible to make comparisons by sex and age and for rural and urban populations from census data in those countries which followed the international recommendations. In fact, however, national practices with respect to defining concepts and measures may differ where countries have modified the recommendations to meet their own particular needs and conditions. For example, the unpaid family worker is defined in different ways from one country to the next. Even within countries concepts may be defined one way for a census and one or more different ways for survey purposes, depending on the agency collecting the data. This is particularly true with respect to labour-force concepts but applies to other areas also, and anyone using the data for national, sub-regional and/or for international comparisons should carefully check the definitions of the concepts used.

On the positive side, population and housing censuses clearly permit the identification of different sub-samples to be studied in greater depth through sample surveys, and they contain key questions which enable the user to identify groups of households or individuals to be singled out for a particular analysis. For example, one might take the question on relationship to head of household and sort out only female-headed households during the processing phase of the census. Further analysis might compare female-headed households with other types. Also, one could match individual person characteristics with household characteristics. This is a complicated operation for most countries, particularly for those countries where the operation is still done by hand, but it is possible.

The censuses of population and housing are useful for many purposes with respect to defining the situation of women but are not always the best source of information, particularly for

rural women. Here census, of population and housing might be supplemented with some data from censuses and surveys of agriculture. Many of the same items recommended in 1980 for population censuses are also recommended for censuses of agriculture, but the units of enumeration and tabulation differ. In censuses of agriculture, including those carried out using sampling techniques, which is becoming a common approach, the holding or the plot which is farmed tends to be the basic unit and most data are presented for "holders" and members of their households. These holders include private holders and members of their households, but they may also include participants in cooperatives or other collective endeavours. However, data are collected on hired agricultural workers and their households in the agricultural censuses of only a few countries.

In sum, censuses of population and housing provide numerous items which may be further disaggregated in order to provide indicators on the situation of women. In many countries these data may be supplemented by the censuses of agriculture, where particular attention must be paid to the situation of rural women.

### **Household Surveys**

Household surveys sample a small part of the population to obtain timely information on one or more topics of current interest. They usually focus on a limited number of topics, such as employment or fertility, but include more questions on those topics than can be included in a census. They also usually cover many basic socioeconomic characteristics, such as those included in censuses, to provide background for the interpretation and analysis of the results. In many countries household surveys are a good source of data, at least at the national level because they tend to cover all types of households and permit comparisons of urban and rural situations. Unfortunately, they are often not large enough to provide very much detail about particular sub-populations, such as minority women, or about many aspects of social life. Some household surveys cover several aspects of social life in a single survey but others focus on a single topic, such as fertility and/or labour-force activity.

Items covered in household sample surveys include:

- description of the structure of the household,
- demographic and social characteristics of household members,
- economic activities,
- employment, unemployment and underemployment,
- occupation,
- non-economic activities,
- earnings income,
- consumption expenditure patterns, and
- poverty or levels of living generally.

Such topics can be found, for example, in the Current Population Survey carried out in the United States of America, in the Labour *Force* and National Household Survey carried out in Mexico and in the Household Labour Force Survey in the Philippines.

Many nations carry out a series of sample surveys conducted at different times during the year. Some of these deal with special topics as noted above, some focus on particular aspects of society, such as agriculture. In no case are the topics completely integrated. For example, agricultural surveys generally focus on agricultural employment on the holding and relate characteristics of the agricultural holding and holder to other economic and social factors. Household surveys focus on individuals and sometimes cover individuals who are economically active in agriculture but relate their characteristics to the household, not necessarily the holding. In this case the primary unit of enumeration for the agricultural survey is the holding and these surveys are related to the census of agriculture. In household surveys, the primary unit is the individual (and perhaps the household), the sampling frame is often obtained from the census of population and the data are related to the census of population. None the less, agricultural surveys are useful sources of information on the situation of women in many countries, especially if the data can be supplemented with material from other sources, such as case studies.

As noted above, countries have used many different types of sample surveys to obtain data on socioeconomic conditions of their populations, particularly their economic activities. These surveys vary widely, from the multi-subject type of survey in

which numerous topics are included to very specialised surveys which are concerned with only one particular aspect of the situation of women. They also vary with respect to geographical coverage. Some include both urban and rural areas, whereas others focus primarily on urban populations. They vary also in their time coverage, techniques of sampling and enumeration, and so on.

Specific examples of surveys of different types which contain information relevant to the situation of women include, for example, the time-budget survey in Romania, the labour-force surveys in Sweden, the Current Population Survey in the United States of America, the labour-force surveys in Egypt, the survey of married women, family and work in Denmark and the World Fertility Surveys. The methods and techniques used in any of these surveys are dependent on the circumstances that exist in each country, the extent to which financial and other necessary resources are available and so on. The United Nations publication series "Sample Surveys of Current Interest" includes summary reports on many national surveys which might be of importance for analysing the situation of women.

### **Registration Systems and Administrative Records**

In contrast to the census, which is an enumeration or counting of persons at about the same point in time, civil registration systems record vital events (births, deaths, marriages and divorces) as they occur. Vital statistics are then compiled from the records generated by the civil registration system. More than 120 countries publish vital statistics on births, deaths, marriages and divorces. Vital statistics which have direct bearing on the situation of women include, for example, statistics of death by age and sex, births by location, age and marital status of mothers, and marriage and divorce statistics.

In the United Nations preliminary guidelines on social indicators, 36 of 149 social indicators shown can be derived from vital statistics. Thus, in all countries improvements in vital statistics will contribute significantly to the quality and availability of statistics on women. In countries where vital statistics systems are seriously deficient, there are, none the less, possibilities for using existing data effectively. For example, vital statistics from selected cities or areas may be compiled to generate a sub-national total that can be useful in understanding the situation of women.

There are other administrative records from which statistics on the situation of women may be generated. These include records of taxes, education, health, employment and crime. For example, in education, administrative records are one of the main sources of data, as will be discussed below. Tax records may in some instances be used to shed light on the size and type of agricultural holdings by sex, which may show important differences between rural men and women. Records of employment offices and/or unemployment insurance offices may indicate something about the employment and unemployment of men and women in the industries and occupations covered and about the characteristics of their jobs. Some countries maintain farm registers. These may permit comparisons of the socioeconomic situation of men and women in agricultural occupations. In addition, a number of countries maintain population registers which record detailed information on individuals continuously through their lifetimes. These data provide a rich source of information on individuals, households and families.

Thus, although there is a variety of sources of data for statistics and indicators on the situation of women in many countries around the world, the series selected will not be uniform in all countries because of variations in quality and coverage in these different sources. There are also more general limitations in the data that do exist, even where they are relatively comprehensive and detailed. Therefore, before proceeding to illustrate specific indicators, it is necessary to review the various kinds of general limitations and variations in the data which do exist.

DIESA/INSTRAW (1988)  
*Compiling Social Indicators on the Situation of Women.*  
Santo Domingo: INSTRAW

## 6. Sex Biases in Statistics

### **Priorities**

Statistics on women have been inadequate for most social policy concerns in most countries, in part because statistical work does not have as high a priority as other activities in the allocation of scarce resources and thus statistics on both men and women are inadequate, and in part because the needs of women, until recently, have had even lower priority. Insufficient and unreliable data result when relatively low priority is given to statistical work and the national statistical infrastructure is weak. That is, in some countries population censuses are relatively infrequent, there are no permanent survey facilities and registration systems and other administrative records are deficient because statistical services are poorly staffed, are short of funds and thus simply cannot collect and process data on many topics. In this context, it is understandable that statistics on women are also poor. However, there are also some countries in which statistics on women continue to be deficient even when there is great concern with improving statistics generally.

### **Communication Problem**

This low priority is further exacerbated by the fact that there is often a problem of communication between the users and producers of the data which do exist. In particular, the often inadequately staffed and overworked statistical offices require very concrete and pragmatic requests for data, and the users concerned with women's issues are frequently unable to describe their needs in specific terms. However, these are general problems which apply to producer and user relations in a number of areas. In this section the focus is on another set of problems which are concerned primarily with the situation of women.

### **Additional Problems**

Thus, in addition to the more general problems of the quality of the basic statistical infrastructure and the communications gap between producers and users, there are two other types of problems which apply particularly to women. First, there are preconceptions with respect to the appropriate roles for women, and second, there are biases in the collection and processing of data on the situation of women that are sex based. These two types of problems have been noted in a 1980



United Nations report concerned with sex-based stereotypes and sex biases.

The first type of problem refers to cultural preconceptions or stereotypes that affect the design of censuses and surveys. For example, the idea that women are not really in the labour force may affect the design of labour-force questions so as to exclude jobs that are commonly performed by women. Similarly, the notion that only men can be heads of households affects the way questions are designed and asked in a survey or census. Such stereotypes also affect the way respondents reply to the questions. If, for example, the gardening and poultry raising done by many rural women are not perceived as "work," they will not be reported as labour-force activities even though they may be the main source of family food.

The second type of problem relates to biases in the collection, processing, compilation and presentation of data. These may arise because of sex-based stereotypes or other technical factors in the processing of data. For example, when census tabulations are published for the employed labour force by occupation, they may be published only for males on the assumption that the employment of women is not of any significance.

### **Improvement Programmes**

Considerable effort has been devoted to improving the concepts and methods involved in the collection of social and economic statistics in recent years. In this context statistics describing the situation of women have been reviewed and evaluated, and an overview of potential sex biases in statistics was included in the 1980 United Nations report. That report discusses possible biases in concepts, classifications and definitions of head of household, household and family, economic activity, marital status, education and literacy, migration, fertility and mortality. It is precisely in these areas that census data must be used in order to develop indicators with respect to the situation of women. Some of the specific biases will be noted in the sections dealing with the indicators. Some general problems are noted here.

### **Disaggregated Data**

A major deficiency concerns the availability of data disaggregated by sex. Data on employment, for example, are often tabulated for males only, even though they may have

been collected from both men and women. A second problem area occurs at the data collection stage and concerns under-reporting or underestimating events for women. Female deaths are often under-reported relative to male deaths, as is the extent of their involvement in economic production, particularly agricultural production. This results from inadequate definitions of such concepts as work.

Other problems develop from treating concepts and data which have different meanings for men and women as though they have the same meanings. When boys and girls complete the same number of years of school they may have been exposed to similar experiences but they may also have been exposed to quite different curricula. Hence, the years of school completed may not have the same meaning for men and women. In some countries, girls are exposed primarily to courses in women's activities, such as cooking, sewing and nutrition, while boys are exposed to more occupationally oriented subjects, such as mathematics, accounting and the sciences.

#### Value of Data

Despite the limitations noted above, most statistical offices appear willing to assist in improving the data available for studying the situation of women and their participation in the development process, as well as the extent of equality between the sexes. Moreover, most regular data collection is linked to government administration and planning and, as such, will be allocated most of the scarce resources for data gathering, and the official statistics will be widely quoted. Hence, it is necessary to note the deficiencies which exist with respect to knowledge of women's situation and to work with the available data to the extent possible.

Although the regular data collected from censuses, surveys and registration systems may not produce as much information as would be desired, they are available and can be used. Still, many data needs may not be amenable to the data collection procedures of censuses or surveys and, therefore, data collection through other, perhaps more qualitative techniques, must be designed to supplement and elaborate what may be derived from existing sources.

There is a growing body of literature on data needed to measure the situation of women. Nearly every meeting on women focuses on the shortcomings of existing data,



particularly census data, with respect to measuring the participation of women in development. None the less, census and survey data can be used to provide a broad profile of the situation of women. In particular, a limited number of important indicators can be derived from such data. These include measures of literacy and educational attainment, measures of economic participation and occupational segregation, and the marital and/or household position of women.

Source: DIESA/INSTRAW (1988)  
*Compiling Social Indicators on the Situation of Women.*  
Santo Domingo: INSTRAW.

# Readings

1. United Nations. (1990) *The World's Women*. New York: UN Publication.
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# 1. The World's Women

## Numbers and Change

Words advocating the interests of women, however plausible and persuasive they may be, need numbers to influence policy--and change the world. Numbers are also needed to better inform women on how their lives are changing or not changing-- globally, regionally and nationally. That was one of the main conclusions of the World (Conference of the International Women's Year) held in Mexico City in 1975, where women's leaders proclaimed 1976-1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, and called on the United Nations statistical services to compile and monitor indicators in several key categories for women. These were:

- Family life.
- Leadership and decision making.
- Health and child bearing.
- Education.
- Economic life.

Remarkably there were few indicators available in the early 1970s to answer even the most basic questions.

Consider this: the number of illiterate women rose from 543 million in 1970 to 597 million in 1985, while the number of illiterate men rose from 348 million to 352 million.

And this: women work as much as or more than men everywhere--as much as 13 hours, on average, more each week according to studies in Asia and Africa.

And this: of 8,000 abortions in Bombay after parents learned the sex of the foetus through amniocentesis, only one would have been a boy.

Numbers can thus give words considerable power--the power to change.

## Productivity

Gaps in investing in women's development persist in the investments that governments might make to increase their economic productivity. Governments give little or no support to activities in which women predominate notably, the informal

sector and subsistence agriculture. Indeed, government policies typically steer women into less productive endeavours. The infrastructure that might underpin their work is extremely inadequate. And the credit available to them from formal lending institutions is negligible. Often illiterate, usually lacking collateral and almost always discriminated against, women must rely on their husbands or on high-priced money-lenders if they want to invest in more productive ventures.

#### **Lower Pay**

There also are big gaps between what women produce and what they are paid. Occupational segregation and discrimination relegate women to low-paying, low-status jobs. And even when women do the same work as men, they typically receive less pay --30 to 40 per cent less on average world-wide. Nor are their prospects for advancement the same as men's, with deeply rooted prejudices blocking them from the top.

#### **No Pay**

Another pay gap is that much of women's work is not paid and not recognized as economically productive. The work is considered to be of no economic importance and is not counted, which brings the discussion back to policy gaps.

#### **Gaps in Policy, Investment and Pay**

Resounding throughout the statistics, is one consistent message. Major gaps in policy, investment and earnings prevent women from performing to their full potential in social, economic and political life.

#### **Policy Gaps**

##### **Integration of women in mainstream development policies**

The main policy gap is that governments seldom integrate the concerns and interests of women into mainstream policies. Development policies typically emphasize export-oriented growth centred on cash crops, primary commodities and manufactures-- largely controlled by men. Those policies typically neglect the informal sector and subsistence agriculture the usual preserve of women. Even when women are included in mainstream development strategies, it is often in marginal women-in-development activities.

### **Counting women's work**

A second policy gap is that governments do not consider much of women's work to be economically productive and thus do not count it. If women's unpaid work in subsistence agriculture and housework and family care were fully counted in labour force statistics, their share of the labour force would be equal to greater than men's. And if their unpaid housework and family care were counted as productive output in national accounts, measures of global output would increase 25 to 30 per cent.

Without good information about what women really do--and how much they produce--governments have little incentive to respond with economic policies that include women.

### **Investment Gaps**

#### **Education**

There also are big gaps between what women could produce and the investments they command. Households--and governments almost always invest less in women and girls than in men and boys. One measure of this is enrolment in school: roughly 60 per cent of rural Indian boys and girls enter primary school, but after five years only 16 per cent of the girls are still enrolled, compared with 35 per cent of the boys.

One consequence of women's low educational achievement is that it puts them at a disadvantage to their husbands when making major life decisions about the work they do, the number of children they have and the way they invest family income

#### **Health services**

Another investment gap is health services. Women need, and too seldom receive, maternal health care and family planning services. And families often give lower priority to the health care of girls than boys. Where health services are being cut back, as they so often are under economic austerity programmes, the health needs of women are typically neglected.

## **Trends in Marriages and Households**

Throughout much of the world--the exceptions are in Asia and the Pacific--households are getting smaller and have fewer children. There are fewer multi generational households, more single parent families and more people living alone. Smaller households suggest the gradual decline of the extended family household, most evident in western developed countries, but also beginning to be apparent in developing countries. Also evident is a decline in the strength of kinship and in the importance of family responsibility combined with greater reliance on alternative support systems and greater variations in living arrangements.

Because more women are living (or forced to live) alone or as heads of households with dependents, their responsibility for their family's survival and their own has been increasing since 1970. Motherhood is more often unsupported by marriage and the elderly are more often unsupported by their children--trends that increase the burden on women. And even for women living with men, the man's income is often so inadequate that the woman must take on the double burden of household management and outside work to make ends meet

Women face another burden that is invisible to the outside world: domestic violence. It is unmeasured but almost certainly very extensive. Domestic violence is masked by secretiveness and poor evidence, and there are social and legal barriers to its active prevention. Men's attacks on women in their homes are thought to be the least reported of crimes--in part because such violence is seen as a social ill, not a crime. Women's economic independence and the corresponding ability to leave an abusive man--are essential for preventing violence and for fostering self-esteem. And as the awareness of women's rights becomes more universal and enforceable, more women will be opposing domestic violence.

## **Women's Working World**

Women's working world continues to differ from men's in the type of work, the pay, the status and the pattern of entering and leaving the work force. The biggest difference is that women continue to bear the burden of managing the household and caring for the family and that men continue to control the resources for production and the income from it. In agriculture, for example, women continue to be left ]labour-intensive tasks that consume the most time.

Women everywhere contribute to economic production. As of officially measured, 41 per cent of the world's women aged 15 and over--828 million--are economically active. At least another 1020 per cent of the world's women are economically productive but not counted as part of the labour force because of inadequate measurement.

Women are left to provide child care, to provide food and health care, to prepare and process crops, to market goods, to tend gardens and live-stock and to weave cloth, carpets and baskets. !.much of this work does not benefit from investment, making it very inefficient and forcing women to work very hard for meager results. In the worst cases., technological investments end up exploiting women - improving their productivity but barring them from any access or control over the profits.

The pattern, then, is that women work as much, or more than men. Although women spend less me in activities officially counted as economically productive and make much less money, they spend far more in home production. If a woman spends more time in the labour force, she still bears the main responsibility for home and family care, and sleep and leisure are sacrificed.

### **The Informal Sector**

One wedge of opportunity for women is the informal sector, including self-employment. Crucial to the survival strategies of many women, the informal sector also opens important long-term opportunities where salaried employment is closed to women, declining or inadequate. Women work in the informal sector because of necessity and convenience. It requires less skill and education. It has fewer biases in favour of men. And it is easier to reconcile with cultural norms that keep women near the home, for there is less conflict between working hours and household tasks. But informal employment is far less secure an employer than the formal work place and productivity is often low.

Incomes may be lower in the informal sector for several reasons. One is the absence or high cost of credit. Another is lack of government support. A third is exploitation by larger firms controlling raw materials or markets. And although women's participation in the informal sector is increasing, the returns are declining. Studies show that there is greater

difference in the earnings of men and women in the informal sector than in the formal.

### **Narrowing the Gaps in the 1990s**

The numbers show the continuing gaps between women and men in policy, investment and pay. What's needed, of course, is equality of opportunity for women--in health, in education, in work and in decision-making at all levels. To get there is going to require extensive changes in policy, in government, in business and in the household, with women and men reworking the conventional assumptions about political, economic and family life. It is also going to require explicit initiatives to advance women's interests, initiatives informed by the analysis of numbers and grounded in the argument that advancing the interests of women benefits everyone.

The cost of these changes, especially when weighed against the benefit, would be small. Many of the policy changes cost nothing. Many of the required investments are small in relation to a country's gross domestic product--and in relation to military spending. True, closing the pay gap will cost something, and men will be the apparent losers. But better pay and incentives for women will increase productivity overall, so that everyone should benefit in the long run.

### **Counting What Women Do**

National statistical services collect little data on women's economic contribution and income. One immediate need is to begin to quantify and assign an economic value to, unpaid housework. Another is to measure women's paid work better. Also needed is disaggregation of all the main indicators by gender and improved compilation, analysis and dissemination of data already collected.

### **Investing in Women's Economic Productivity**

With the right policies, it will be possible to invest better in women's human capital and in their productive capital.

All countries should increase the enrolment and attendance of girls at all levels of schooling and give them opportunities in all fields of study. Education does much for a woman's status--in society, in the work place, in the family. It also enables women to take more control of their lives and to respond better to opportunities. Not least, it puts wives on more equal footing with their husbands in making important decisions about their



families' future. Educational systems can also do much to eliminate the cultural and societal barriers that block women's opportunities. Of special concern, however, is dealing with the nearly 600 million illiterate women already missed by educational systems.

### **Reducing the Gaps in Pay**

The requirements here are obvious: put an end to occupational segregation and wage discrimination, and recognize women's unpaid work as economically productive. These are matters for legislators, business leaders, and statistical services. But these are also matters for men and, above all, women. Men are not going to open the doors to their domains. Women are. And equipped with better skills and different views of their role in life. they will.

Source: United Nations. (1990)  
*The World's Women.*  
New York: UN Publication.

- *Accelerate disarmament in the developing world*--Although the cold war has ended between the East and the West, it remains to be phased out in the developing world. If developing countries merely froze their military spending at the 1990 level during the next decade, this would release nearly \$100 billion for their essential human development agendas--which, combined with the restructuring of aid allocations proposed later, will be enough for universal literacy, primary health care and safe drinking water by the year 2000. This will also require some major initiative from industrial countries. Needed especially are time-bound targets to phase out military bases and military assistance, internationally monitored restraints on military shipments, and an enlightened donor-recipient policy dialogue on reductions in military spending.
- *Forge new regional and international alliances for peace*--Preventive diplomacy is needed to diffuse tensions around the globe *before* there are blowups. This demands a new role for the United Nations, not just in peacekeeping but in peacemaking and peacebuilding. After all, an ounce of prevention is better than a ton of punishment. During 1992, the UN had to intervene in several internal conflicts, from Bosnia to Somalia, and the number of UN soldiers quadrupled to more than 50,000. With conflicts in countries displacing those between them, the time has probably arrived for the UN to have a permanent military force, mainly for the new goal of peacemaking. But military force is only a short-term response. The long-term solution is faster economic development, greater social justice and more people's participation. The new concepts of human security demand people-centred development, not soldiers in uniform.

**New models of sustainable human development are needed to invest in human potential and to create an enabling environment for the full use of human capabilities**

The purpose of development is to widen the range of people's choices. Income is one of those choices--but it is not the sum-total of human life.

Human development is development *of* the people *for* the people *by* the people. Development *of* the people means investing in human capabilities, whether in education or health or skills, so that they can work productively and creatively. Development *for* the people means ensuring that the economic growth they generate is distributed widely and fairly. Earlier *Human Development Reports* (1990-92) concentrated on these first two

components. This Report advances the argument by concentrating on development *by* the people--on giving everyone a chance to participate.

The most efficient form of participation through the market is access to productive and remunerative employment. So, the main objective of human development strategies must be to generate productive employment. It has long been assumed that pursuing economic growth through increasing output would necessarily increase employment. This clearly has not happened. Over the past three decades, the growth rate for employment in developing countries has been about half that for output. And as output rose in many OECD countries in the last decade, employment lagged behind. ILO projections for the next decade hold no comfort. On present trends, employment's growth will continue to lag far behind that of both output and the labour force.

We are witnessing a new and disturbing phenomenon: *jobless growth*. And policy-makers the world over are searching for development strategies that combine economic growth with more job opportunities. No comprehensive programme has yet emerged, but governments can do several things to increase employment. Governments can:

- *Invest* generously in basic education, relevant skills and worker retraining.
- *Liberate* private enterprise and make markets more accessible to everyone.
- *Support* small-scale enterprises and informal employment, mainly through reform of the credit system and fiscal incentives.
- *Create* an efficient service economy for the future by investing in the new skills required.
- *Encourage* labour-intensive technologies, especially through tax incentives.
- *Extend* employment safety nets through Labour-intensive public works programmes in periods of major economic distress.
- *Reconsider* the concept of work and the duration of the work week, with a view to sharing existing work opportunities.

Policy-makers are searching not only for development models that are people-centred. They also want development to be more sustainable--to protect the options of future generations. This means that the conventional definition of capital must be

broadened beyond physical capital to include human and natural capital.

The supposed choice between economic growth and sustaining the environment is false and dangerous. Growth is imperative if poverty is to be reduced. But the distribution of growth must change, and it must become less wasteful of natural resources in both rich and poor nations. The new models of development must also recognize that poverty is one of the greatest threats to the environment. That is why it is as important to address the "silent emergencies" of poverty (water pollution, land degradation, environmental diseases) as it is to focus on the "loud emergencies" (global warming, ozone depletion) that usually dominate the headlines.

In short, the new models of sustainable development must be much more sensitive to people and to nature.

**New partnerships are needed between the state and the market to combine market efficiency with social compassion**

Heated ideological discussions have often marred an objective analysis of the relative roles of markets and the state. Some believe in the benevolence of the state and the need for constantly correcting the ill effects of the market. Others glorify the virtues of the market-place and argue that the economy should be liberated from the dead hand of state bureaucracy. Both groups assume, to a large extent, that the state and the market are necessarily separate and even antagonistic--that one is benevolent, the other not. In practice, both state and market are often dominated by the same power structures.

This suggests a more pragmatic third option: that people should guide both the state and the market, which need to work in tandem, with people sufficiently empowered to exert a more effective influence over both.

If people's interests are to guide both the market and the state, actions must be taken to allow people to participate fully in the operations of markets and to share equitably in their benefits. Markets should serve people--instead of people serving markets. After all, markets are only the means--people the end.

Changing markets to make them more people-friendly would start by maintaining the dynamism of markets but adding other measures that allow many more people to capitalize on the advantages that markets offer.

- *Preconditions*--People need the education and health standards to take advantage of market opportunities. Also needed is a reasonable distribution of productive assets (particularly land) so that people do not come to the market with totally unequal buying or selling power. Since poorer people often have very little access to credit, governments need to reform their credit systems to give access to the poor. In addition, governments have to ensure that markets are open to all--irrespective of race, religion, sex or ethnic origin. Other preconditions for effective people-friendly markets include adequate physical infrastructure (particularly in rural areas), a free and rapid flow of information, a liberal trade regime and a legal system that encourages open and transparent transactions.
- *Accompanying conditions*--are needed to ensure that markets work as freely and efficiently as possible. One of the most important is a stable macroeconomic environment--especially to ensure stability in domestic prices and external currency values. But markets would also benefit from a comprehensive incentive system, with correct price signals, a fair tax regime and an adequate system of rewards for work and enterprise. Markets should also be able to work untrammelled by arbitrary and unpredictable government controls.
- *Corrective actions*--When markets do not produce a desirable outcome, the state needs to regulate and correct. This would include protecting competition through antimonopoly laws, consumers through regulations on product standards, workers through adequate and well-enforced labour legislation, and such vulnerable groups as children and the elderly. It would also include protecting the environment, by banning certain types of pollution and ensuring that polluters pay.
- *Social safety nets*--must be in place to catch the victims of the competitive struggle. Sometimes, this support need only be temporary, for the short-term unemployed, for example. But there will always be those excluded wholly or partially by the market: the very young, the very old, the disabled and those with heavy domestic commitments. In several developing countries, such social safety nets include employment schemes for the unemployed, pension schemes for the old, feeding programmes for malnourished children and mothers, and free basic health and education for all low-income groups.

The need to create people-friendly markets is all the greater now that so many countries have embarked on strategies of economic liberalization and privatization. Many developing countries have already undertaken bold programmes to liberalize trade and finance, reform their taxation systems, deregulate the labour market and reform or privatize public enterprises. The countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union have been undergoing an even more dramatic transition--from command economies to market economies. The experiences of 11 developing countries and transition economies--Argentina, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Poland, Russia and Viet Nam--are analysed in this Report.

One of the most significant aspects of economic liberalization has been privatization. Between 1980 and 1991, nearly 7,000 enterprises were privatized, around 1,400 of them in the developing world, chiefly in Latin America. As one element in a coherent private sector development strategy, privatization can greatly stimulate private enterprise. But mistakes are already being made in the process of privatization. The Report lists "seven sins of privatization": maximizing revenue without creating a competitive environment, replacing public monopolies with private ones, using nontransparent and arbitrary procedures, using the proceeds to finance budget deficits, simultaneously crowding the financial markets with public borrowing, making false promises to labour, and privatizing without building a political consensus.

For economic transitions to be guided by the interests of the people--and for markets to be made people-friendly--requires new patterns of governance centred around the rising aspirations of the people.

**New patterns of national and global governance are needed to accommodate the rise of people's aspirations and the steady decline of the nation-state**

Pressures on the nation-state, from above and below, are beginning to change traditional concepts of governance. On the one hand, globalization on many fronts--from capital flows to information systems--has eroded the power of individual states. On the other, many states have become too inflexible to respond to the needs of specific groups within their own countries. The nation-state now is too small for the big things, and too big for the small.

National governments must find new ways of enabling their people to participate more in government and to allow them

much greater influence on the decisions that affect their lives. Unless this is done, and done in time, the irresistible tide of people's rising aspirations will inevitably clash with inflexible systems, leading to anarchy and chaos. A rapid democratic transition and a strengthening of the institutions of civil society are the only appropriate responses. Among the many specific steps that must accompany such a transition, the two main ones are to decentralize more authority to local governments and to give much greater freedom to people's organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) --instruments of people's participation discussed at length in this Report.

The decentralization of power--from capital cities to regions, towns and villages --can be one of the best ways of empowering people, promoting public participation and increasing efficiency. Many industrial countries delegate 25% or more of total government spending to the local level. But the governments of developing countries remain much more centralized, delegating only 10% or less of budgetary spending and giving local governments few opportunities to raise funds through taxation or borrowing.

Where decentralization has taken place, it has often been quite successful, encouraging local participation, reducing costs and increasing efficiency. This is evident from experiences all over the developing world-- from the Rural Access Programme in Kenya to the *gram sabhas* in the Indian state of Karnataka and the local bridge construction in the Baglung district of Nepal.

Decentralization also increases the pressure on governments to concentrate on human priority concerns. Given a fair chance, local people are likely to choose ready access to basic education and health care rather than the construction of distant colleges or hospitals.

One danger of financial decentralization is that the richer regions can raise more through local taxation and so will get better services. But experience shows how to overcome this. Brazil allows states to collect taxes but then redistributes them so that the richer states in the South and South-East get back only a quarter of the taxes collected from them, while the poorer states in the North get back more than twice what is collected there.

Decentralization can, however, end up empowering local elites rather than local people. So, there can never be effective local



participation in developing countries without a redistribution of power--if decentralization is to promote human development, it must be accompanied by genuine democracy at the local level. Another major instrument for people's participation is their organization into community groups. Indeed, people's organizations and NGOs have grown dramatically in recent years, offering a powerful means of correcting the failures of both markets and governments. People's organizations tend to be formed in response to a felt need or a common interest. People might simply form self-help groups to pool their labour, obtain credit or buy goods in bulk. Or they might be responding to a failure by government to provide infrastructure or social services or to a failure of markets to protect vulnerable groups.

Although NGOs have increased in number and financial clout, there have been few systematic evaluations of their effectiveness. In broad terms, they have had a clear impact in four main areas:

- *Advocacy on behalf of the disadvantaged*--On such issues as human rights, the environment, women, poverty alleviation and indigenous peoples, NGOs have organized powerful advocacy groups that have changed the thinking of national and international policy-makers.
- *The empowerment of marginalized groups*--In most developing countries, poverty is often caused less by an absolute shortage of resources than by their skewed distribution. NGOs' emphasis on empowerment and their support of people's organizations have often enabled marginalized groups to resist local elites and claim their rights. In many countries, particularly in Asia and Latin America, they have been pressuring governments to provide land for the landless and embark on agrarian reform.
- *Reaching the poorest*--NGOs often manage to reach groups that governments find the most difficult to help, particularly the poorest 20% of the population and those in the rural areas, where government services may be thin or non-existent. It is doubtful, though, that they reach the very poorest--most NGOs probably miss the poorest 5-10%.
- *Providing emergency assistance*--One strength of NGOs is the ability to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. Their network of contacts allows them to give advance warning of disasters and urge international action. And their



independence means that they can operate in circumstances that are politically difficult for official organizations.

Although NGOs are effective in these and other respects, it is important to keep the scale of their operations in perspective. In the early 1980s, one estimate suggested that NGOs touched the lives of about 100 million people in developing countries--60 million in Asia, 25 million in Latin America and some 12 million in Africa. Today, the figure is probably nearer 250 million and rising--but that is still only a fifth of the 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty in developing countries.

The small impact of NGOs is also evident at the national level. In Bangladesh, the Grameen Bank, one of the most internationally renowned NGOs providing credit for the poor, accounts for a mere 0.1% of total national credit.

This is not a criticism of NGOs--it is a reminder of a stark reality: NGOs can supplement government but never replace it.

The decentralization of government authority and the emergence of NGOs are powerful processes for greater participation by people. But they can be effective only if the overall framework of national governance changes--to become genuinely democratic and participatory.

Let us also recognize that the forces of democracy are not likely to be so obliging as to stop at national borders. This has major implications for global governance. States and people must have the opportunity to influence the global decisions that are going to affect them so profoundly. This means making the institutions of global governance much broader and more participatory. There should, in particular, be a searching re-examination of the Bretton Woods organizations. And the United Nations must acquire a much broader role in development issues. To contribute effectively to sustainable human development will probably require some form of Economic Security Council within the UN, where all nations can participate on the basis of geographical representation--with none holding a veto --to provide a new decision-making forum.

**New forms of international cooperation must be evolved--to focus directly on the needs of the people rather than on the preferences of nation-states.**

The new emphasis on human security coupled with sustainable development will have to be matched by a fresh approach to international development cooperation.

So far, the basic motivation for donors to give aid has been to win friends in the cold-war confrontation between socialism and capitalism. Some bilateral donors did place greater emphasis on developmental and humanitarian concerns, and so did the multilateral agencies. But in general, the dominant objectives have been political.

More than half of US bilateral assistance in 1991 was earmarked for five strategically important countries: Israel, Egypt, Turkey, the Philippines and El Salvador. With five million people and a per capita income of \$1,000, El Salvador received more US assistance than Bangladesh, with 116 million people and a per capita income of only \$210. And the strategic significance of Egypt has been such that it received aid of \$370 per poor person in 1991. Compare that with just \$4 per poor person for India--even though Egypt has nearly twice the income of India.

Bilateral official development assistance (ODA) is badly allocated, showing the considerable potential for beneficial restructuring: Twice as much ODA per capita goes to high military spenders as to more moderate spenders.

- Only a quarter of ODA goes to the ten countries containing three-quarters of the world's poor.
- Less than 7% of ODA is earmarked for human priority concerns.
- Most of the \$15 billion in technical assistance is spent on equipment, technology and experts from industrial countries - rather than on national capacity building in developing countries.

Aid is allocated this way because it suffers from the scars of the cold war, from a focus on nation-states rather than on people, from a bias towards the public sector and from a reliance on western development models.

The changed circumstances of the 1990s demand an entirely new approach to ODA:

- *Focus aid on human priority issues*--Aid should be directed at human priority issues, such as health and basic education, and at environmental security and reducing population growth. Clear and specific goals in these areas--identified, implemented and monitored--would obtain greater public and legislative support in donor nations. At least 20% of total aid should be allocated to human priority concerns, three times the present 6.5%.
- *Base ODA allocations on levels of poverty*--ODA should be allocated to people rather than to countries, and it should go where the need is the greatest, to the poorest people wherever they happen to be. For example, the ten countries containing three-quarters of the world's poorest people should get around three-quarters of ODA, not the present one-quarter.
- *Link ODA with mutual concerns*--ODA must be in the mutual interest of recipients and donors. Recipients would be justified in insisting that ODA allocations be guided by their priorities in the fields of human development, poverty alleviation, employment creation and accelerated economic growth. Donors, by contrast, could legitimately link their ODA policy dialogue with their concerns on such matters as human rights, reducing international migration pressures, pollution, nuclear proliferation and drug trafficking--as well as the control of terrorism. Perhaps as much as 3% of aid funds could be earmarked for spending within donor nations to prepare public opinion for these post-cold-war realities and to increase public awareness of the interdependence of the North and the South.
- *Adopt a new people-centred policy dialogue*--ODA should be accompanied by a new form of policy dialogue based on the real interests of people, rather than those of the developing country governments that negotiate aid. This means putting much more pressure on governments to improve the distribution of income and assets, to direct spending away from military towards social concerns and to attend to the larger issues of better national governance.
- *Use technical assistance for national capacity building*--Technical assistance should be used increasingly to hire national experts, to invest in local institutions and to accelerate human development in the recipient countries. The ultimate criterion for judging the success of any technical

assistance programme must be that it has built adequate national capacity and phased itself out over a predefined period.

- *Place ODA in a larger framework of sharing global market opportunities*--ODA can make a significant contribution to developing countries, but it must also be conceived in a larger framework. As the 1992 Report pointed out, developing countries are being denied market opportunities worth ten times the annual flows of ODA. The long-term solution to poverty is not charity. It is more equitable access for poor nations to global market opportunities.
- *Create a new motivation for aid*--The old motive of fighting the cold war is dead. The new motive must be the war against global poverty, based on the recognition that this is an investment not only in the development of poor nations but in the security of rich nations. The real threat in the next few decades is that global poverty will begin to travel, without a passport, in many unpleasant forms: drugs, diseases, terrorism, migration. Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.

### **Women --the non-participating majority**

Women, a majority of the world's population, receive only a small share of developmental opportunities. They are often excluded from education or from the better jobs, from political systems or from adequate health care.

- *Literacy* --Women are much less likely than men to be literate. In South Asia, female literacy rates are only around 50% those of males. And in many countries the situation is even worse: in Nepal 35%, Sierra Leone 36%, Sudan 27%, and Afghanistan 32%. Women make up two-thirds of the world's illiterates.
- *Higher education* --women in developing countries lag far behind men. In Sub-Saharan Africa, their enrolment rates for tertiary education are only a third of those of men. Even in industrial countries, women are very poorly represented in scientific and technical study: in Spain, the ratio of female to male third-level students in these fields is 28%, in Austria 25%, and in Canada 29%.
- *Employment* --In developing countries women have many fewer job opportunities: the employment participation rates

of women are on average only 50% those of men (in South Asia 29%, and in the Arab States only 16%). Even when they do find work, they tend to get paid much less: in the Republic of Korea, women's wages are only 47% those of men. Wage discrimination is also a feature of industrial countries: in Japan, women receive only 51% of male wages.

Women who are not in paid employment are, of course, far from idle. Indeed, they tend to work much longer hours than men. The problem is that the work they do, in domestic chores and caring for children and the elderly, does not get the recognition it deserves in national income accounts.

- *Self-employment* -- Women's opportunities for self-employment can be restricted in a number of ways. In some countries they are still not allowed to own property, or to offer collateral for bank loans or even to drive.
- *Politics* -- In some countries, women are still not allowed to vote. And women almost everywhere are underrepresented in government: in 1980, they made up just over 10% of the world's parliamentarians and less than 4% of national cabinets. In 1993, only six countries had women as heads of government.
- *Health* -- Women tend on average to live longer than men. But in some Asian and North African countries, the discrimination against women - through neglect of their health or nutrition - is such that they have a shorter life expectancy. Indeed, comparing the populations who should be alive, based on the global mortality patterns, it seems that 100 million Asian women are "missing".

One of the greatest health risks for women in poor countries is childbirth. Maternal mortality rates in the developing world are more than 15 times higher than in the industrial countries.

- *National statistics* -- Women are often invisible in statistics. If women's unpaid housework were counted as productive output in national income accounts, global output would increase by 20-30%.

## Women in Japan

Japan, despite some of the world's highest levels of human development, still has marked inequalities in achievement

between men and women. The 1993 human development index puts Japan first. But when the HDI is adjusted for gender disparity, Japan slips to number 17. Here is why:

In education, the tertiary enrolment ratio for females is only two-thirds that of males.

Similarly in employment, women are considerably worse off. Women's average earnings are only 51% those of men, and women are largely excluded from decision-making positions: they hold only 7% of administrative and managerial jobs.

their representation is even lower in the political sphere. women obtained the right to vote, and to be elected to parliament, only after the Second World War. Yet today, only 2% of parliamentary seats are held by women, and at the ministerial level there are no women at all (compared with the 9% average for industrial countries and 13% for the other countries of Asia). Nevertheless, one or two women have achieved important political positions, and a number of women were among the founders of the Social Democratic Party.

In legal rights in general, Japan's patrilineal society is only gradually changing to offer women greater recognition and independence. Only in 1980 were the inheritance rights of Japanese women raised from one-third to one-half of their late husband's property (the rest goes to the children). And in other aspects the law is still not gender-neutral. Thus, the legal age of marriage is 18 for men, but 16 for women. And after divorce, a man can remarry immediately, but a woman has to wait six months.

Japan now has political and non-governmental organizations pressing for change. The League of Women Voters, for instance, is lobbying for a correction in the disparity of seat distribution in parliament, and for a greater participation of women in policy-making.

Source:  
United Nations (1993)  
*Human Development Report 1993.*  
New York: UN Development Programme.

### 3. Collecting Data on Women in Development

#### Why are Statistics Needed?

#### Women's Groups and Organisations

- To measure and understand the situation and status of women.
- To assist in identifying the most disadvantaged groups of women.
- To measure progress and the changes in the situation and status of women.

#### Government Ministries

- To measure and understand the situation and status of women.
- To assist in identifying the most disadvantaged groups of women.
- To assist in the formulation of policies and programmes designed to improve the situation and status of women.
- To monitor changes and measure the impact or effectiveness of policies and programmes.

#### Semi-government and Non-government Organisations

- To measure and understand the situation and status of women.
- To assist in identifying specific programme target groups.
- To assist in planning, implementation and monitoring of specific programmes relating to the situation and status of women.

#### Universities and Other Researchers

- To provide basic teaching and research material on the situation and status of women.
- To assist in identifying specific problem areas in which research would be useful.
- To encourage institutional support for national policies relating to improving the situation and status of women.



### **United Nations and Other International Organisations**

- To measure and understand global and regional patterns relating to the situation and status of women.
- To assist in developing global and regional programmes to improve the situation and status of women.
- To highlight specific areas in countries for which technical assistance and financial support could be provided.

### **Other Individuals and Organisations**

- Provide a basis for responding to specific requests for information on the situation and status of women.

### **Use of Data on Women**

Appropriate socioeconomic statistics and indicators on women are necessary to improve the status of women. Because appropriate statistics on women are not available, women's needs are not adequately considered in the planning of many development initiatives. On a smaller scale, relevant data on women is also required to support proposals for individual projects which involve women.

Although statistical data can be biased, it is readily accepted as an objective measure. Statistical information provides a means of making comparisons between different groups, allowing relative disadvantage to be identified and quantified. Statistical data also permits quite small changes to be monitored over time.

Statistics on women play an important role in the process of informing women about their own status and in informing society about the need to improve women's status. This educational role of statistics is important because it is the attitudes of society which largely determine the status of women.

### **Data Needs**

#### **Employment**

A major area of concern is employment. Data is needed on women's economic activities, on their occupations and on the income they earn. Given that many women live in rural areas with a subsistence lifestyle, it is important that the data adequately cover employment in the informal sector. Unfortunately, informal sector data is poor even for males.



### **Education**

Another major area where statistical data on women is required is education, especially women's access to education and educational attainment.

### **Demographics and Health**

Demographic and health data on women also provide useful indicators of women's status. For example, early marriage and child bearing are associated with low status, as are high birth rates and high mortality. Information on nutrition, morbidity rates and access to medical services also might be required.

### **Other Needs**

There are many other areas in which statistical data on women are required for effective measurement and monitoring of the status of women. These cover the legal, political and social aspects of women's lives. For example, data showing the incidence of violence against women may be needed in order to convince others of the scale of this often-ignored crime and the need to deal with offenders. The number of women holding local or national political positions, or other public offices, might be necessary for monitoring purposes. Information on services and facilities available to women also may be required.

It should be noted that wherever data on women is produced, parallel data on males should also be produced, if applicable. The status of any person or group is measured by comparison with other persons or groups, and in the case of women, the comparison is made with males. Where data, such as fertility rates, apply only to women, international comparison is appropriate.

In some instances, there is a need for data on a special group of women who have a different status due to a particular characteristic. Examples include childless married women, unmarried women, very poor women, illiterate women, professional women, widowed women, disabled women, migrant women or women with an absent, migrant spouse.

### **Data Sources**

Much of the data on women is obtained from population censuses and from household surveys.

## Censuses

Population censuses usually provide quite comprehensive demographic information on women, including marital status, fertility and mortality rates. (In some countries, vital registration data also provides this information). In addition, a census provides information on employment, educational attainment, as well as a whole range of other potentially useful information including ethnic origins, religion, household structure, and migration. However, a census will not provide very detailed data, because the costs involved in surveying the whole population prohibit detailed questionnaires.

## Household Surveys

Household surveys provide more detailed data than censuses, and in urban areas include income and expenditure surveys, and employment surveys. When rural surveys are conducted, they almost invariably take the household as the unit of production. As a result even if women's economic activities are listed (and they rarely are) women's contribution to the economy is not obvious.

In some countries, agricultural censuses have been carried out. These are a potential source of valuable information on the rural economy, but to date have not been used to produce information on the activities of individuals.

## Administrative Records

Administrative records may provide valuable information on women, although they may not be published or classified by sex. However sex may be obvious from people's names.

## **Making the Best Use of Currently Available Data**

It must be recognised that there already is a great deal of data available which indicates the socioeconomic position of women. Most of this data has not been exploited. Not only is it important to use already-available data, but also no serious request for additional data can be made until existing data has been thoroughly explored. It is thus a priority to examine all existing sources of data. In doing so, women's leaders will not only gain a better understanding of the situation of women, but also they will develop the knowledge necessary to define which data should be gathered.

Each country should create a central information centre where relevant data on women can be stored and made available to a wide range of users. The development of a central database will help identify gaps in statistics on women so that positive action can be taken to fill the gaps.

The location of such a database will depend on the availability of resources--financial, physical and human. However, wherever the database is located, representatives of women's groups should collaborate with statisticians in planning the design and use of the database.

Also every effort should be made to identify existing data in order to minimise the cost of creating the database.

#### **Distributing Available Data**

Every country should try to produce a short pamphlet (about ten pages long) containing basic data on women taken from censuses and surveys. This pamphlet should cover demographic characteristics, education, labour force participation and Income. This pamphlet will help spread knowledge about women's status and Indicate gaps in Information about women.

#### **Improving Data on Women in Development**

The low status of women and the poor quality of data on women is of course inextricably linked. The fact that women have low status means that data on women has low priority, which in turn means that data is not available to support the case for improving women's status. The production of data on women has low priority, not only because women have a low status, but also because resources for the production of statistics in general are scarce. It is important to break this cycle.

One of the ways to improve the quality of data on women lies in increasing communication between statisticians and women's leaders, so that each has a better understanding of the Issues which concern the other. Women's leaders should be involved in defining the content of census and survey questionnaires, for example. If women were trained in the use of statistics and felt able to communicate with statisticians, and if statisticians understood better the needs of women concerning data, more appropriate data might be produced.

#### **Special Unit**

Ideally, a special unit responsible for women's socioeconomic statistics and indicators should be set up within the government with representatives from departments working with statistics,

planning, women's issues, etc. However, if it is not possible to have a special unit in the government, then a group of academics, voluntary workers, and women statisticians could be asked to set up a women's unit. The special unit should make sure that:

- Methods for collecting and analysing socioeconomic statistics about women are continually reviewed and improved.
- Data is relevant to women's concerns and cover women in all socioeconomic groups and categories.
- Socioeconomic indicators about women are produced and well publicised.

In summary, the following points should be considered in order to improve the range of data of women:

- Identify women's activities both inside and outside the home and break main activities into smaller components to get complete statistics on various aspects of women's work.
- Encourage collection of non-traditional data sources. Some data may be overlooked if it is usually assumed to be about women's personal concerns. In fact, data on child care, unemployment and under employment among married women are increasingly accepted as social concerns, not just personal concerns.
- Establish data priorities and focus on the particular agency in the government responsible for collection. For example, maternal mortality data from the department dealing with health; household survey data on the hours spent carrying water from the department responsible for water supplies (by sex and in the wet and dry seasons).
- Organise discussions with people who benefit from programmes and projects in order to identify issues as well as data needs. Emphasise the benefits of participatory research and data gathering in order to obtain valid data and mobilise people for participation.
- Since existing data may over represent the educated, urban elites, emphasise improving data collected about the majority of women in a nation, especially the rural poor.

## Regional Exchange of Information

Even where useful data does exist in published form, it has not been utilised by women. This problem occurs because women's leaders have not been adequately trained to use statistical information. This is not to suggest that women's leaders should be trained statisticians, but they could benefit from some basic statistical knowledge and an appreciation of the uses for statistical information. Training for women in statistical communication is clearly needed. It is worth repeating here that it is not the responsibility of statisticians to make use of and generally analyse data on women: it is the role of women's leaders to place the data in context and to use and disseminate it as they see fit.

Although there is a moderate body of statistical information on women already in existence, this data could in many cases be improved to make it more appropriate to the needs of women. This is particularly important for data on women's employment, which is needed for the integration of women's concerns into the economic sections of development plans.

One of the ways of encouraging the better use and production of statistical information on women is through the regional exchange of information. One suggestion would be to organise regional meetings on a regular basis (say every two years) specifically concerned with monitoring the status of women. This would cover two aspects: first, the actual status of women, and changes in that status, and second, methods of measuring and monitoring the status of women including identifying data needs and improving data utilisation. Such meetings would require detailed country reports on both aspects of data management. Although such a meeting might begin with very modest aims, over time expertise could be developed.

Finally, in addition to establishing a database on women, consider giving an award or plaque to the government office which makes the most progress in improving data on women. This event could be publicised by having a prominent woman present the award.

Source:  
United Nations. (1991)  
*Training Manual on the Technical Processing of  
Information Concerning Women in Development.*  
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New York: UN Publication.

## References and Further Readings

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