Mobilising Gender-responsive Data Ecosystems in Africa: Challenges & Solutions

A PARIS21 regional learning conference

21-22 September 2022, Dakar, Senegal

Background

In the wake of COVID-19, women and girls across Africa and the rest of the World have faced reinforced barriers to achieve gender equality, including disruptions in education and service delivery, weakened access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and a "shadow pandemic" of domestic and intimate partner violence. While the world strives to move on from the pandemic, its effects continue even as more familiar threats emerge in climate change, economic instability, and food insecurity, further darkening the outlook for inclusive response and recovery. Timely, granular gender data and statistics are more vital than ever, but remain elusive in Africa, and indeed, in countries all over the world. It's time for data-driven solutions for gender equality.

Against this backdrop, National Statistical Systems (NSS) across Africa face a challenge and an opportunity: a challenge to overcome long-standing gender data gaps that render women and girls invisible; an opportunity to enable evidence-informed action to build back better, more inclusive societies in COVID-19 response and recovery. The African Union's Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment 2018-2028 found that sex and age disaggregated data remains notoriously difficult to access in countries across the region. Even where governments gather such data, it is often not analysed and used to its fullest potential to improve policymaking and leave no one behind. In a recent survey of COVID-19 policy responses, conducted by UNDP and UN Women, only one country in Africa was found to have a holistic gendered response to the pandemic, and as many as eight countries had not considered gender at all in their policy responses.

High-quality gender data are a critical tool for accelerating action around gender equality and sustainable development. However, the persisting lack of comprehensive gender statistics coupled with chronic underfunding of systems for regular gender data production, dissemination, and use hinders uptake of these data to design effective programs and assess progress towards the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Despite these challenges, countries across the continent have introduced new strategies and solutions that chart a path toward more inclusive and resilient statistical systems that empower women and girls. Learning from each other's challenges and successes in the field of strategic, systemic and participatory approaches to gender statistics has never been more important.

At this key moment, together with Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Senegal's Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD), PARIS21's regional convening in Senegal will highlight lessons, celebrate progress, and promote regional exchange and dialogue on gender-responsive data ecosystems in Africa. The event contributes to the momentum created by UN Women, AfDB, PARIS21, COMESA and UNECA and the latter's African Programme of Gender Statistics (APGS) training week in Nairobi earlier in September – the first in-person session for gender focal points across the continent in three years. By encouraging leaders and partners to set bold ambitions for gender statistics in coming years, PARIS21's regional learning conference will stimulate the conversations in Nairobi.

PARIS21 and gender data ecosystems

Under its Strategy 2021-25, PARIS21 is institutionalising gender mainstreaming in its programming to support data ecosystems that leave no one behind. Through catalytic partnerships with GAC, UN Women, and gender data champions at national, regional, and global levels, PARIS21 has developed new approaches to advance gender statistics, working in more than 15 countries to close gender data gaps and advance inclusion in statistical practice. PARIS21 facilitates this work using a new, innovative set of tools, including guidance on integrating gender in the NSDS Lifecycle, a framework for Assessing Data and Capacity Gaps in Gender Statistics, an ADAPT gender module to support gender data planning, and e-learning courses on communicating gender statistics, among others.

PARIS21 leveraged these tools in partnership with multiple countries and partners in Africa, strengthening the capacities of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to design and execute strategies to deliver more and better gender data. Senegal's Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD) was among the first pilot collaborations in this regard; together with UN Women, PARIS21 supported Senegal to mainstream gender as the second pillar of their National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS3), providing a rich foundation to target gender data gaps and strengthen partnerships around gender data and statistics. Lessons from these country-level activities have enriched further regional engagements in Africa, including through new collaborations with UNECA, Open Data Watch and Data2X in the Gender Data Network, and a series of trainings in partnership with STATAFRIC.

Held in the framework of the PARIS21 Fall Meeting Series, this regional conference will provide a platform for exchange among NSOs, leading agencies in women's affairs, and development partners to explore strategies and solutions for gender-responsive data ecosystems. Hosted by ANSD, with support from Canada, the event will feature insights from PARIS21's engagements in gender data, showcase country impact in Senegal and across the continent, and facilitate exchange among stakeholders. In particular, the agenda will focus on two strategic areas of gender mainstreaming, which are crucial to enable financing, streamline coordination, and unlock solutions: strategic planning and new data partnerships.

About the PARIS21 Fall Meetings

The meeting in Senegal is part of a series of regional meetings designed to highlight partner achievements and initiatives in key thematic areas, culminating at the PARIS21 Board and **Fall Meetings** in Paris in November 2022. These interactive events will bring partners together to showcase good data practices and solutions from across the world, providing the opportunity for more in-depth discussion and collective learning. Making use of both in-person and virtual meeting formats, the emphasis will be on promoting greater engagement and enhanced learning from country activities.

Agenda

Day 1: Making the most of strategic planning for gender statistics – opening up avenues for better data, coordination and financing

National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) provide a unique platform to address ongoing limitations in statistical production, dissemination, and use. Integrating a focus on gender statistics at key moments in the NSDS lifecycle provides unique insights into statistical capacity constraints and opportunities that shape performance of the national statistical system and its potential to deliver better data for better policies and better lives. The momentum and dialogue developed in this process has proved effective to drive action, not only to improve gender statistics, but to enhance statistical capacity overall.

This session will explore the key drivers for successful gender mainstreaming in statistical planning, including awareness raising and resource mobilisation. A guided discussion will enable participants to identify how to design and implement more impactful strategies to strengthen the production, dissemination, and use of gender statistics.

Time	Session	Country/partner
9:00-9:10 AM	Welcome from ANSD	Dr. Allé Nar Diop, Director General, ANSD
9:10-9:20 AM	Welcome from PARIS21	Dr. Johannes Jutting, Executive Head, PARIS21
9:20-9:30 AM	Partner's address: UN Women *From data to action – lessons from "Women Count" in amplifying gender data production and use*	Ms. Oulimata Sarr, Regional Director of UN Women West and Central Africa (TBC)
9:30-9:40 AM	Partner's address: Embassy of Canada *Why it matters – investing in more and better gender data through Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy*	Ambassador of Canada to Senegal (TBC)
9:40-9:50 AM	Minister's address: Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille et du Genre *Gender data for gender equality – the landscape for evidence-informed action in Senegal*	Hon. Salimata Diop Dieng, Mme la Ministre de la Femme, de la Famille, du Genre et de la Protection des Enfants, Sénégal (TBC)
9:50-10:00 AM	Formal event opening & inauguration of the agenda	Hon. Salimata Diop Dieng, Mme la Ministre de la Femme, de la Famille, du Genre et de la Protection des Enfants, Sénégal (TBC)
10:00-10:30 AM	Photo session	
10:30-11:00 AM	Coffee/tea break	
11:00-11:15 AM	Setting the scene: importance of gender data and statistics	Dr. Johannes Jutting, Executive Head, PARIS21
11:15 AM-12:30 PM	Session 1a: Making the most of strategic planning for statistics - a pivotal moment for gender mainstreaming	Presentations of key achievements of gender mainstreaming in the NSDS process by national statistical offices and partners: • Senegal ANSD • UN Women Senegal • Niger INS • Lesotho BOS Followed by a panel discussion on the key approaches during the NSDS process that enable an impactful strategic planning for gender statistics.
12:30-2:00 PM	Lunch break	

2:00-3:20 PM	Session 1b: Resource mobilization for gender statistics following strategic planning	Resource mobilisation for gender statistics: • Kenya KNBS • Cameroon INS • UNFPA Senegal • PARIS21 Followed by a guided discussion on the best practices ensuring sustainable financing of gender statistics strategies.
3:20-3:45 PM	Tea break	
3:45-4:45 PM	Session 1c: Awareness raising and training about gender (statistics)	Presentations of country practices to raise awareness about gender statistics: • ENSAE Senegal • Rwanda GMO • UNECA presentation of APGS • PARIS21: Gender Data Network Followed by a guided discussion on the effective training tools and advocacy allies
4:45-5:00 PM	Conclusions of Day 1	GAC, UN Women WCA, PARIS21

Day 2: From strategy to action: catalytic partnerships to close gender data gaps

An inclusive, multi-stakeholder NSDS process can jump-start collaboration between stakeholders, increase policy alignment, and break down institutional silos. Inter-agency committees, user-producer dialogues, and joint data initiatives emerge as important mechanisms to streamline existing gender data production lines and develop new gender data collection instruments. Recent efforts of NSOs across the African region reveal the potential of platforms for collaboration and partnership to close gender data gaps.

This session will highlight solutions to engage and mobilise stakeholders around gender data and statistics through coordination, catalytic partnerships, and participatory approaches, featuring insights from countries on gender-based violence surveys and citizen-generated data. An interactive roundtable will provide an opportunity for participants to distil lessons and identify solutions to scale in the future.

9:30-9:40 AM	**Welcome and agenda for Day 2**	**PARIS21**
9:40-10:30 AM	Session 2a: From strategy to action: catalytic partnerships to close gender data gaps	Spotlight on the implementation of GBV surveys and the partnerships with non-state actors: • Ghana GSS • Kenya KNBS • Kenyan Civil society actors Followed by a roundtable discussion on effective solutions to raise awareness and monitor GBV
10:30-11:00 AM	Tea break	

11:00 AM-12:30 PM	Session 2b: From strategy to action: catalytic partnerships to improve coordination	Spotlight on coordination of gender statistics: • Cameroon INS • Senegal ANSD • Burkina Faso INSD • UN Women and AfDB • STATAFRIC Followed by a roundtable discussion on best practices to improve the coordination of gender statistics
12.30-2.00 PM	Lunch	
2:00-3:00 PM	Session 2c: From strategy to action: catalytic partnerships to close gender data gaps – roundtable	Roundtable/Break-outs on strengthening gender data ecosystems: • Participation • Data governance • Coordination • Financing
3:00-4:00 PM	Conclusions	Reporting back & key takeaways – PARIS21, GAC, UN Women, UNECA
4:00 PM	Closing Remarks	Dr. Allé Nar Diop, Director General, ANSD