



GAA's Review: UN & WHO Briefing on "Data and Statistics on Gender Equality: Progress and Challenges"

(Convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, on the occasion of the thirty-fourth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women)

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Data Disaggregation

Christine Brautigam, Chief, Women's Rights Unit, Division for the Advancement of Women and Mary Chamie, Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Branch in the Statistics Division spoke to about twenty NGO's on the implications of the Statistics Division's report on *The World's Women 2005 Progress in Statistics*.

Collecting data about women in the world has double importance. First, good data gives a clear and accurate picture of women's situation in the world. Second, data inform decision-making and creating appropriate policies and monitoring. Since 1995 the UN has made significant progress on collecting data and on building a research methodology. Two recent publications have pushed forward those efforts.

- *The World's Women 2005, Progress in Statistics* (DESA, Statistics Division)
- *The WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women* (World Health Organization)

*About The World's Women 2005, Progress in Statistics report:
Are women well represented in statistics?*

Sex and age disaggregated data form the basis to describe women's situation. Implicit in the report is the goal to assure wide dissemination of free and reliable statistics worldwide.

Data disaggregation by sex and age impacts all kinds of development policy. For example, how can we know how many vaccines should be produced and sent to children in a developing country if we don't know what part of the population they represent? In addition, we have a strong need for national statistics because they allow comparison among areas or groups, such as the unemployed, the disabled or the elderly. International statistics cannot give these kinds of comparisons.

Here are some of the striking figures resulting from a 30 year period of collection.

- In 26 countries, such as Colombia, Peru, Nigeria, Togo, representing 10% of the world's population, no general census has been conducted for the last ten years.
- In Africa, 33% of the population has not been counted by a national census.
- 19 countries did not fully report births and deaths from their administration to their statistical office. This represents 70% of the world population.
- 53 countries did not report the data by sex and age of their population.
- 60% of least developed countries are not represented in sex and age data.
- 164 countries did not use their last census to report school attendance.
- 81 countries did not report economic activity by sex and age.
- 108 countries did not report employment data.
- 162 countries did not report wages data.

Of course, such figures have serious implications for measuring the effectiveness of the Millennium Development Goals.

Beyond numbers, the report team reached other important conclusions. Despite no official means to collect this information, the report team found that domestic violence impacts women the most. This means that an intimate partner or a former partner is most likely to abuse women. From a human rights' point of view, the lack of data prevents an accurate description of whether women can enjoy their right to health.

At the moment, statisticians are making big strides to develop methods to collect data about violence against women and to launch the first unified collection system in this area.

The speakers highlighted the important paragraph about mainstreaming gender in all aspects of the production of statistics entitled "Strategy 10." It says that official national statistics should be made a required component of international reporting mechanisms, especially in the periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Global Action on Aging

777 UN Plaza, suite 6-J
New York, NY 10017

www.globalaging.org

About the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women

What can be said about domestic violence towards women?

At the outset, researchers faced the impossibility of comparing data of two countries that had been collected with two different methods. By interviewing 24,000 women in 15 different countries with (1) translatable and adaptable questionnaires and (2) trained interviewers who could guaranty privacy and security to the interviewed women, WHO reached conclusions that may not be new but are now fully documented by high quality statistics.

The main conclusion found that intimate partners are the main perpetrators of physical, psychological and sexual violence against women. The previous statistics led to conclude that domestic violence concerned 1 woman out of 3. These new statistics now suggest that about 1 woman out of 2 is or was concerned by domestic violence. In some countries the interviews show that the situation is improving. For instance, 20% of Japanese interviewed women say they were abused in their life whereas "only" 4 % declare having been abused in the past 12 months. In other countries, the situation has worsened. Sixteen percent of interviewed Ethiopian women said they had been subject to violence from their partner in the past year. Biological fathers perpetrated 90% of violence during pregnancy.

More, this study shows that women internalize norms that justify violence. In some countries, up to 70% of women think that the acts of violence are justified, for instance, by their behaviors. This culturally oriented violence testifies to how necessary it is to change cultural norms saying violence is tolerable or even appropriate. The vast majority of women keep silent against domestic violence. For most the interview was their first time discussing it.

In the WHO study, high quality data showed that international or national work most focus on the protection of the individual, on updating laws to protect women against violence and promoting cultural change.