



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Series of SDG Webinars for the Arab Region: UNFPA SDG 5.6.1, SDG 5.6.2

An Interagency and Experts Collaboration to Improve the Production and Dissemination of SDG Indicators from Official National Sources

7 April 2021

Report of the Meeting

BACKGROUND

The need to improve the production and dissemination of reliable comparable and timely data on SDG

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus Resolution 70/1: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda). The Resolution reaffirms the need for the strengthening of national data systems through “collaboration between national statistical systems and the relevant international and regional organizations to enhance data reporting channels and ensure the harmonization and consistency of data and statistics for the indicators used to follow up and review the Sustainable Development Goals and targets”.

The resolution also urges countries, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions, and the Bretton Woods institutions among others “to intensify their support for strengthening data collection and statistical capacity-building, including capacity-building that strengthens coordination among national statistical offices”. Moreover, the resolution “Urges international organizations to base the global review on data produced by national statistical systems and, if specific country data are not available for reliable estimation, to consult with concerned countries to produce and validate modelled estimates before publication, urges that communication and coordination among international organizations be enhanced in order to avoid duplicate reports, ensure consistency of data and reduce response burdens on countries, and urges international organizations to provide the methodologies used to harmonize country data for international comparability and produce estimates through transparent mechanisms;”

Five years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda several countries are facing considerable challenges in monitoring targets in many policy areas. The current COVID-19 pandemic highlights the value of measuring and monitoring: no strategy can be developed, and no measure can be implemented without a proper monitoring and evaluation system.

Many countries in the Arab region are reporting on SDG indicators, however, reporting on progress on many of the SDG indicators, remains limited in the region. Insufficient availability and quality of statistical information on SDG indicators hamper the capacity of policymakers to generate evidence-based and effective policy responses and implement the 2030 Agenda.

Translating these recommendations and resolutions into tangible results is imperative and will require intensive collaboration at the national, regional and global levels. Regional Commissions' Statistical bodies "are the nexus between the Statistical Commission at the global level and the implementation at the national level of the norms endorsed by the Commission. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, the support provided by the regional commissions to assist Member States in adapting, implementing and measuring progress towards the implementation of national development plans is of particular significance as it influences the quality of statistics and methodologies used, as well as the use of new and innovative methodologies and sources of data, known as the transformative agenda for official statistics. The regional commissions carry out activities to strengthen the capacity of Member States to produce, use and dissemination official statistics and also provide a regional platform for sharing experiences and practices in statistics work¹."

Interagency and Experts Collaboration- ESCWA & UNFPA

The SDG Framework marks enormous progress in addressing women's reproductive rights. For the first time, an international development framework includes not only targets on sexual and reproductive health services (SDG target 3.7), but also targets that address the barriers and human rights-based dimensions of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (SRHRR). SDG target 5.6, for example, focuses on "ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights" and is measured by SDG indicators 5.6.1 and 5.6.2. UNFPA is the Custodian Agency of SDG indicators 5.6.1 and 5.6.2. The two indicators were reclassified from Tier 3 to Tier 2 in the year 2016 and 2018, respectively, and require regular data production from countries for SDG reporting.

In this context, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) implemented an assessment of data disseminated through the UNSD SDG Global database and those in national SDG official sources to identify those less produced, disseminated, or less understood by national statistical offices (NSOs), and are more available in UN Agencies' and UNSD databases.

Based on the assessment results, ESCWA in collaboration with United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA) met on 16 March 2021 to discuss the organization of a joint webinar to build capacities of Arab countries to improve the production and dissemination of SDG indicators 5.6.1 and 5.6.2.

¹ Source: Relevance and effectiveness of the statistical work of regional commissions - thematic evaluation of regional commissions, Committee for Programme and Coordination, 57th session, April 2017 (E/AC.51/2017/8)

Indicators	UNSD SDG database (C-CA)	UNSD SDG database (E-M-N-NA-G)	SDG in national reports
5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care	2 (C) (Comoros, Jordan)	0	≈ Jordan
5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education	0	8 (G): Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Mauritania, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen	0

C: country data, CA: country adjusted data, E: estimated data, G: global monitoring data, M: modeled data, N: non-relevant data, NA: data nature not available as presented in UNSD SDG database, = : National data same as Country data, ≈: National data nearly same as Country data, ≠National data is not equal to Country data

OBJECTIVE- WHY?

ESCWA and UNFPA organized a webinar on SDG indicators 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 that are less produced/disseminated in the Arab region to create a common understanding among data producers on how to collect, measure and disseminate these SDG indicators to increase data availability and enhance national data flow to national policy makers, regional users including the custodian agency.

The main objectives of the regional training were:

- Enhancing understanding of metadata and nature of data in the UNSD SDG database.
- Improving statistical capacities to invigorate production and use of comparable SDG indicators.
- Strengthening inter-institutional coordination to invigorate production of SDG indicators and data flow.
- Sharing and discussing country challenges in measuring SDG indicators

OUTCOME- FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants from NSOs and other relevant stakeholders were familiarized with concepts, methods including data flow and dissemination channels. The webinar encouraged interactive dialogue and participants were invited to share national experiences in data collection and dissemination including challenges and concerns. Presentations to the meetings were made available in the Arabic and English languages. A record of the discussions is provided in Annex on Q&A of this report. The full webinar proceedings were recorded to develop training materials.

5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

This indicator measures the human impact of an enabling environment. It includes three sub-indicators each with one question that measures to what degree a woman can participate in the decision making on her own or/and in partnership with her spouse/partner.

Only two countries from the 22 Arab regions have collected data for the three sub-indicators through health surveys, namely Jordan and Comoros. Jordan has applied the questions in Demographic and Health Survey in 2018 with some modification on the target population. For comparability purposes countries were encouraged to follow the standard questions and metadata in the production of this indicator and cover all married females aged 15-49 years old, including those pregnant as target population. Some countries expressed concern with regard to the sensitivity of some questions. However, those sensitive questions when asked in the context of health-related surveys and conducted by female field workers should not pose any challenge as witnessed by DHS and Violence against Women surveys implemented in the Arab region.

There is a small discrepancy between Jordan official national data and data reported in UNSD SDG Global database as country data.

Recommendations for Countries:

- The main source of data is health-related household surveys such as DHS, MICs and VAW. It is recommended that countries are to include the standard questions in their upcoming surveys in order to generate relevant data for the production of the indicators. Health related surveys or those implemented by female field workers are recommended to encourage higher response rate.

Recommendations for ESCWA/UNFPA:

- ESCWA and UNFPA to provide support and advice to countries upon their request and share good practices.
- ESCWA to discuss with DOS and UNFPA justification for the discrepancies noted.

5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education

This indicator provides information on the enabling and regulatory and legal environment. It is collected by DESA through UN Inquiry on Population and Development questionnaire sent to NSOs who in turn send it to the Health Ministries or other related institutions to complete the relevant questions. It is then sent back to NSOs that dispatches it to DESA. The last round of data collection was initiated in November 2020 and it will end by 30 April 2021. DESA/UNFPA will collect data for this indicator once every four years through the same process.

As per latest information eight Arab countries have reported on this indicator. Although countries provided data to DESA/UNFPAs, many NSOs expressed concern for not being consulted on data before they were published on SDG Global database and related reports. This is evidenced by the fact that none of the countries reported on their national indicator in their VNRs, SDG reports and dashboards. It was also noted that the national data reported by the 8 countries were labelled under nature “Global” instead of “Country” or ‘Country Adjusted” where it should. Below is a summary analysis of data flow of indicator 5.6.2

Collection method	DESA Questionnaire on UN Inquiry on Population and Développement
Periodicity	Every 4 years – latest Nov 2020 -30 April 2021
Data flow1 – incoming Global to National	DESA – NSO- Health Ministry
Data flow2 – outgoing from National to Global	Health Ministry – NSO- DESA
Data flow 3 – feedback/consultation process	
Dissemination in SDG Global database	8 (G) countries
Dissemination at national level	
UNSD Country – Country Adjusted	
Calculation method	Needs explanation with examples

Recommendations for Countries:

- All NSOs are encouraged to complete the information requested for this indicator as per DESA questionnaire with relevant ministries.
- Countries request clarification on method of calculation of the indicators, and its sub-indicators in order to adopt the data and disseminate at the national level and in VNRs.

Recommendations for ESCWA/UNFPA:

- UNFPA to reconsider labelling nature from “Global” to ‘Country’ or “Country adjusted, as seem appropriate, based on the fact that the indicator is based on country data.
- UNFPA to provide explanation on calculation method of this indicator to provide clear guidance to countries in the region.
- UNFPA to address the issue of data flow specifically the consultation process after obtaining data from the NSOs to ensure that the countries are aware and in agreement on the final data being published by the custodian agencies and UNSD in the SDG Global database as per GA Resolution 70/1.

TARGET AUDIENCE - WHO?

The meeting was attended by 27 representatives from 14 national statistical offices and one training institute, namely: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Somalia,

Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen. The meeting was also attended by AITRS and UNDP/Amman representatives.

SCHEDULE & LANGUAGE– PLATFORM?

The regional training was held on 7 of April from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. via Zoom. Facilitation of the workshop was conducted in Arabic/English with simultaneous interpretation in English and Arabic languages.

TRAINING CERTIFICATION

27 participants were awarded a training certificate by the organizers for full attendance and completion of Webinar evaluation.

REGISTRATION AND EVALUATION

All participants have completed the evaluation. The results are as follows:

- 74 per cent of respondents rated the overall quality of the webinar as “Excellent” and 26 per cent as “Good”.
- 63 per cent indicated that the webinar was successful in reaching its intended objectives as “Excellent”, and 37 per cent as “Good”.
- 59 per cent rated the inputs provided by presenters in reaching the intended outcome of the webinar as “Excellent” and 41 per cent as “Good”.
- 70 per cent rated the overall organization and logistics of the webinar as “Excellent” and 30 per cent assessed it as “Good”.

AGENDA

Day: 7 April		Speakers
2:00 - 2:10 pm	Introduction to the Webinar (objective, speakers, and content)	ESCWA – Neda Jafar
2:10 - 2:30 pm	5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care	UNFPA – Hala Youssef
2:30 - 2:55 pm	Jordan Country Experience Discussion – Q&A	DOS - Amani Joudeh
2:55 - 3:20 pm	5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information, and education	UNFPA - Emilie Filmer-Wilson
3:20 - 3:40 pm	Discussion – Q&A	
3:40 – 4:00 pm.	Way Forward and Conclusion	ESCWA – Neda Jafar UNFPA – Hala Youssef

GROUP PHOTO

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting in progress. The main window displays a grid of 25 participants, each with their name and a small video thumbnail. The participants listed are: ESCWA Zoom-2, Nadine, Amani _ DoS Jo..., Witness Chirinda, zainb Ali Iraq, Emilie, Hala Youssef, Joelle Atallah, Gedi, Tahani, Magda Mohame..., ليلى المتولي, Ferchichi Arbia, Nah Cheikh, BHUA MERYEM, Amani Joudeh, Ahmed, Reem Elsybaey, BOUZIANI-Mor..., Asma saleh, INTERPRETER R..., INT ENG AR Gys..., Manal.Sweidan, Nadia, and yasmin hassan.

On the right side, there is a chat window titled "Participants (28)". The chat history includes the following messages:

- على طريقة حسابه والنتائج التي سيتم التوصل اليها
- From Magda Mohamed Elgaali... to Everyone: Thank you so much Emilie
- From zainb Ali Iraq to Everyone: ست ندى والمصدر منو يكون
- From Tahani to Me: (Direct Message) you will send us the recording of today
- From Joelle Atallah to Everyone: Please open your cameras to take a group photo
- From Witness Chirinda to Everyone: Thank you so much colleagues for this important webinar. Much appreciated

At the bottom of the chat window, there is a direct message from Botnyna Alawneh: (Direct Message) Type message here...

The Zoom meeting interface also shows a "Recording..." indicator at the top left and a system tray at the bottom with the time 3:49 PM and date 07/04/2021.

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: ORGANIZERS AND LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Annex 2: METADATA

Annex 3: Q & A

Annex 1: ORGANIZERS AND LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

LIST OF ORGANIZERS

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Annex 2: METADATA

Indicators	Data Source	Metadata	Questions
5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care	Main source: DHS, MICS, GGS Second source: Medical records, registration	Only women who provide a “yes” answer to all three components are considered as women who make their own decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health. Computation method: Numerator: Number of married or in union women and girls aged 15-49 years old: – for whom decision on health care for themselves is not usually made by the husband/partner or someone else; and – for whom the decision on contraception is not mainly made by the husband/partner; and – who can say no to sex. Only women who satisfy all three empowerment criteria are included in the numerator. Denominator: Total number women and girls aged 15-49 years old, who are married or in union. Proportion = (Numerator/Denominator) * 100	1. Who usually makes decisions about health care for yourself? – You – Your husband/partner – You and your husband/Partner jointly – Someone else 2. Who usually makes the decision on whether or not you should use contraception? – Mainly respondent – Mainly husband/partner – Joint decision – Other, specify 3. Can you say no to your husband/partner if you do not want to have sexual intercourse? – Yes – No – Depends/ not sure
5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health	Main source: Administrative records (Ministry of Health, gender equality Ministry, Ministry of women’s affairs)	The indicator measures specific legal enablers and barriers for 13 components across four sections. The calculation of the indicator requires data for all 13 components. The 13 components are placed on the same scale, with 0% being the lowest value and 100% being the most optimal value. Each component is calculated independently and weighted equally. Each component	Example: Maternity care: Does the country have any law(s) or regulation(s) that provide for access to maternity care? (Yes/No) Do the law(s) or regulation(s) include any restrictions by: • Age (Yes/No)

<p>care, information and education</p>		<p>is calculated as: $C_i = ((e_i/E_i) - (b_i/B_i)) * 100$ <i>C_i</i>: Data for component <i>i</i> <i>E_i</i>: Total number of enablers in component <i>i</i> <i>e_i</i>: Number of enablers that exist in component <i>i</i> <i>B_i</i>: Total number of barriers in component <i>i</i> <i>b_i</i>: Number of barriers that exist in component <i>i</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital status? (Yes/No) • 3rd Party authorization (e.g., spousal, parental/guardian, medical) (Yes/No) • Sex (Yes/No) (where applicable- in other components) <p>Are there any other plural legal systems that contradict (in part or in total) the law(s) or regulation(s)? (Yes/No)</p>
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Country /Name	Questions	Answers
Indicator 5.6.1		
Tunisia - Nadia Tawairi	I think there is a problem with this indicator since the decision to have a child is a common decision between the wife and her husband for many reasons, why should it be a wife 's decision?	Correct, the decision is not only a wife’s decision. It should be a wife’s decision or/and a joint decision. A woman’s ability to decide, gives her the possibility to be independent. This indicator measures to what degree a woman can participate in the decision making.
Tunisia - Nadia Tawairi	Can you propose another proxy indicator for those countries who can't still have this indicator right now?	The indicator 5.6.1 has three direct questions. There are no proxies.
Tunisia - Nadia Tawairi	The question should be addressed to all women not only married ones!	The questions are addressed to all women aged between 15 and 49. Some countries may choose to specify women in union as per their national context.
Tunisia - Nadia Tawairi	I think this question should be introduced in the violence surveys we will have good proxies and even the answer to this question	These questions can be included in the VAW surveys, ESCWA VAW Toolkit includes them.
Oman - Abeer Alnaamani	What about the sensitivity of the questions? it will not be acceptable by the community!	In Egypt, while conducting the DHS, they found that people started knowing more about their rights. Women want to participate more in the decision making. The problem is not with the question but how to address it, to which age group. The purpose is to educate and empower women and not to address sensitive questions, which is not the case. No sensitivity in asking the questions, since DHS is addressed to women by women field workers.
Iraq – Zainb Ali	Can we include the questions in IWISH and MICS or only MICS?	You can include it in the IWISH if it is conducted regularly and by female field workers.
ESCWA	Some countries do not implement health surveys such as GGC	For the data to be reliable, it must be produced from health surveys such as DHS. But it can be collected from other sources. In other terms, these questions must be included in the health

	countries. How we will the countries collect the data? Are there alternative sources?	services, such as medical records and registration. It should be included in the vital statistics of countries. A collaboration must be undertaken between the agency and countries to expand the database and include it in the health services sector.
Iraq – Zainb Ali	To whom should the question be asked: women who are married, have been married? Does the question’s timeframe include the past and the future?	All married women and adolescent girls of reproductive age (15–49 years old) who are using any type of contraception.
Iraq – Zainb Ali	What is the source of data?	Household surveys, preferably health surveys or where female field workers are employed.
Indicator 5.6.2		
Tunisia - Nadia Tawairi	Could you please tell us what's the results of this indicator for developed countries?	You can check the results in the data UNFPA has. There is a mixture of results. For example, Sweden scored an extremely high of 90% or more, but other countries are not doing well. It comes to additional restrictions that some countries put on the access of women to these services.
Tunisia - Nadia Tawairi	When there are laws how do you make sure they are implemented? is it in the Survey also?	There is a challenge in terms of methodology. There is a limit to how much we can measure with an indicator. We understand 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 to be a comprehensive package. 5.6.2 gives us the enabling and regulatory and legal environment. 5.6.1 give us the human impact of that enabling environment whether there are laws and they are being implemented and reach the human. The indicator really focuses on law and regulations. We are doing a new research with the University of California to see how the countries are implementing the laws and how to help the countries to make sure these laws and regulations are implemented.
Bahrain – Fatema Salem	The data was collected between November 2020 and deadline end of April 2021, when is the next cycle of data collection for this indicator?	The indicator will be collected every four years by UNFPA/DESA questionnaire. Latest data collection ends in April 2021.