VNR Lab #15 - Path to equal: New Measurement Framework on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

15 July 2021, 8–9 am (EDT), Virtual (Zoom)

This lab was organized by UN Women and included speakers from ministries of three countries. Participants discussed the various good practices used by governments to integrate a gender perspective in the VNRs and develop and analyze gender statistics, including through inter-ministerial coordination, involving national gender equality mechanisms and national statistical offices, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Participants underscored that a gender perspective must be integrated in the implementation and monitoring of all 17 SDGs.[1] Emerging data on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including from rapid gender assessment surveys, show that women are disproportionately impacted by the increased unpaid care and domestic work during the pandemic, which is compounded by the lack of basic infrastructure and public services.[2] VNRs should include the use of outcome data, such as from time use survey and other processes focused on policy responses. For example, only 1 in 5 labour market and social protection measures enacted to tackle COVID-19 were gender-sensitive.[3] Emerging data shows that domestic violence and other types of violence, such as cyber violence, has grown globally. VNRs should reflect these trends, as well as the opportunities, policy responses, and challenges to address these issues.

Inequality in the home (e.g., uneven sharing of unpaid care work) impacts inequality outside the home, (e.g., labour force participation). Labour force statistics, which are regularly collected in most countries, should be used to portray the story of women's empowerment and the lack therefore, and should be disaggregated by sex as well as by marriage status and household composition to understand the barriers faced by women to access economic opportunities.[4] Regarding the distribution of power, not enough is done to ensure gender parity in political participation at national and local levels.

In the preparation of VNRs, countries are encouraged to look at gender gaps throughout the life course, as inequalities start early, such as in access to education, and compound over the lifetime. VNRs should also analyze inequalities from an intersectional perspective, as disparities are often based on several factors such as location, wealth, and ethnicity. Countries should map existing data sources, create an inventory of sex-disaggregated statistics and gender-specific indicators to assess progress towards gender equality. It is important to establish baselines, monitor progress by disaggregating data beyond just sex, use both qualitative and quantitative data in policymaking, develop protocols and ensure collection of data on marginalized groups.

Participants highlighted strategies used by governments to generate gender statistics and integrate a gender perspective in the VNRs, such as preparing reports on each SDG and using a multi-stakeholder approach; having national gender equality mechanisms and gender focal points across ministries assist in the analysis of gender data needs across the SDGs; generating disaggregated data by sex, age and

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[1] See UN Women/UNSD annual [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot](#). The 2021 edition, due out in September 2021, will be available in English, French and Spanish.
[2] *[From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19](#)*.
[3] Ibid.
[4] *[Spotlight on Goal 8: The impact of marriage and children on labour market participation](#)*.

location in the national indicator framework; integrating technology in data collection; developing new household sampling frames and COVID-19 impact surveys; developing national indicators and census analytical reports for groups in vulnerable situations; and partnering with UN agencies to generate data for gender-specific indicators on SDG targets.

Another example of national efforts includes the development of a replicable method using machine learning process for comprehensive classification of official data which analyzes the level of accessibility of women to services and the link between their economic empowerment and other dimensions. It was suggested to explore traditional as well as non-traditional methods for data collection, such as citizen science, big data, social network interpretation and geospatial data, to fill in data gaps; to have information strategies with greater impact on society and public policymaking, to create replicable methods to enable international cooperation, and to focus more on gender inequality, beyond traditional indicators.

Strategies to address challenges in integrating a gender perspective in the VNRs include continuous capacity-building on gender statistics, integration of gender statistics in census and survey instruments, development of regulations and strategies on gender statistics, partnership to enhance resources on collection and analysis of gender statistics, integration of gender statistics in national and country planning, budgeting and monitoring frameworks, and development of guidelines on gender mainstreaming in planning and budgeting processes.