

**Work Session on Gender Statistics**  
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**PRIORITY GENDER ISSUES AND THE STATISTICS REGARDING  
GENDER SENSITIVE INDICATORS**

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**Introduction**

1. The activity deployed by the Romanian official statistics, mainly during the last decade, included, as a priority goal, the promotion of the collection, analysis and distribution of statistical data disaggregated by sex, as well as the improvement and harmonization of concepts and methodologies used in gender statistics.

Taking into account that gender based data collection and analysis are valuable tools for understanding and evaluating the situation and conditions of women's and men's lives, but also for informing policy makers, interested users and the largest audience - the official statistics established as a strategic objective to generate and disseminate gender - disaggregated data and information.

Based on the fact that many relevant statistics for presenting and analysing women's and men's situation are available today in our national official statistics, our statisticians were called upon to develop a more comprehensive knowledge of various forms of gender equality issues, to improve the measurement of main gender related issues and to meet, in a suitable form, the requirements of policy makers, to put in information for policy substantiation, for planning and evaluation.

The statistical producers were more and more involved in developing and testing appropriate research methodologies and to calculate relevant gender indicators, not only to develop gender statistics and analysis, but also in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the goals stipulated by the Global UN Conferences in national programmes.

As a consequence, a considerable work has been done and progresses were achieved in our country, in ways of presenting gender statistics effectively, about how women's and men's situation differ in terms of their economic, social and political life.

In the first half of this year, in co-operation with the UNDP Representative in Romania, the National Commission for Statistics launched a publication "Women and Men in Romania - 2000" and also prepared a Report on improvement and strengthening of gender statistics - which includes a Plan of Action for the next few years.

2. The improvement of gender statistics has to take into account the necessity to identify sex differences in living conditions and status over the life course, and to assess women's and men's contribution in the economy and society.

Gender statistics needs the improvement of the content and definitions of the produced indicators, as well as to use proper methods, classifications and measurements. Such improvement should be made as an integrated part of the international statistical activity that developed and promoted concepts, standards and recommendations clearly defined on production and use of gender statistics.

According to our opinion and experience, the components of work deployed in engendering statistics are focused on the following items:

- An appropriate selection of topics to be investigated, mainly those which reflects gender sensitive issues or new ones related to women's and men's situation in society;
- The identification of statistics to be collected to reflect to an appropriate extent gender issues and gender perspective in all relevant political, economic and social policy fields;
- Reviewing and improving the concepts and definitions used in data collection, that adequately reflect the diversities of women and men in society and evaluate all aspects of their lives;
- As parts of their ongoing programmes, statistics should collect and keep standards to ensure data quality and data integrity, as well as to ensure time series comparability;
- Find ways of proper analysing and presenting data that can be easily read and used by policy makers and other interested users;
- To develop relevant gender impact indicators for monitoring progress, to provide information to be used in gender policy programmes and measures and to monitor and evaluate the impact of the implementation of policies on women and men situation. The concerns are oriented to develop and produce indicators that are needed to define goals, to measure inputs and progress, to measure outcomes and evaluate impacts.

3. Actually, priority goals for the improvement of gender statistics, taking into account the existing information, are to develop:

- A more comprehensive knowledge of all forms of women and men work and employment in formal sector of the economy, especially the paid and unpaid work in informal (unregistered) sector (agricultural and non-agricultural activities);
- To ensure a better understanding of reasons which generate women's underemployment and unemployment;
- Improved concepts and methods of data collection and on the measurement of poverty among women and men, or of the increasing income inequality;
- To conduct regular time - use surveys and develop the classification of activities for time use in order to draw up suitable studies which present information on the gender disparities of non - economic employed work (like: housework, care of children, disabled and elderly persons, voluntary work, formal education, a.s.o) or on the use of leisure time for entertainment and recreational activities;
- Strengthen the vital statistics system and health statistics, to wider characterise lifestyle and living conditions;
- To ensure indicators needed to evaluate the social welfare in terms of supply and demands of social support and social care, especially for older people.
- Improved specific gender indicators on crime and justice, mainly on the victims and perpetrators of all forms of violence against women (like domestic violence, sexual harassment, incest and sexual abuse, trafficking a.s.o.)
- Participation of women in public life and in decision - making; the respect of women's human rights and the equal enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

4. Taking into consideration the above-presented objectives, the national official statistics has in view to develop a suitable range of activities, included in a medium -term Plan of Action, to improve and strengthen gender statistic.

This Plan of Action include priority actions to ensure:

a) - The extension of the actual programme of statistical inquiry, to project and accomplish new statistical researches which ensure the needed information. Among this inquiries, we could mention those which approach new aspects and issues in gender equality and equity, namely: survey of living conditions in households, time-use survey of households, survey in health status of population, or the inquiry on the continuous educational training.

In the economic field, new aspects on employment in formal and informal sectors, the real amount of paid and unpaid work - based on the characteristics of economic units, (data from structural enterprise surveys), and on earning differentiated by gender - have to be ensured.

Valuable findings concerning the household incomes and expenditures/ consumption will be ensured by the harmonised family budget survey (according to the European common survey methodology). This statistics has to be differentiated by gender and deciles of incomes/expenditures, for various types of households, ensuring a pertinent measurement of the poverty level.

b) Simultaneously with the strengthening of the existent statistical researches, made more “gender-friendly”, strains has to be set down - in cooperation and partnership with other interested factors - for a better organization and use of available administrative sources to obtain new statistical information on women’s and men’s situation in economy and society.

c) Achievement of a system of statistical gender indicators which reflect adequately the diversity of gender sensitive issues in society and the situation of women’s and men’s life. This system of indicators are ensured based on the registered and produced variables from all statistical sources, being presented in form of ratios, percentages, rates, measures of central tendency, of dispersions and skewness, index numbers, measures of correlation a.s.o.

The national system of gender indicators cover the following fields:

- population;
- households, families, fertility;
- education and training;
- labour force;
- incomes and earnings;
- living conditions, housing;
- health and mortality;
- criminality and justice;
- Participation in public life and decision making.

This system contains approximately 250 indicators.

d) Perform and edit a number of publications on the situation of women and men, in form of data collection pocketbook, analysis and studies.

All available data have to be disseminated in various forms (printed, electronic publication, through

Internet), which are easy accessible for a wide range of users.

- e) Establish a dedicated database with information on women and men.
- f) To carry on and organize conferences, seminars and workshops, based on the achieved works and of gender issues in our country.
- g) An organised framework of co-operation with other governmental agencies, research and academic centres, and representatives of civil society, will be set up, in view to improve and develop gender statistics according to the new requirements risen in the respect of human rights and in securing equity and equality between women and men.

5. During the last decade a raised concern was dedicated to determine the economic and social consequences of the population ageing. Even more pronounced growth occurred in the number of “very old” people.

Restraint concerns were oriented towards the different situation of elderly women. Available information shows a higher increase for women in old age. Their living arrangements and housing conditions differ from those of men in old age, as we could mention that old women have a greater tendency to live alone or in collective households, but only few of them with their partner or with their children.

The growth of older people, as number and share in the population - broken down by gender - make that demand for housing and care changes considerably in next future.

The labour force participation of older people, particularly those under 75 years have not decreased as it was estimated, mainly in the last decade of the transition period. A high share of older people, especially men, are working part-time, ensuring for them and their family the needed life resources from their activity deployed especially in the informal sector of a subsistence agriculture.

The living conditions of the elderly persons - living alone, less likely than elderly couples - are deteriorated in the last period. We could mention that the “poverty rate” for elderly persons, mainly those of old women is higher than for the adult or young population. Women, as compared to men are more likely to live in a household with low income, especially women in old age (widows) living alone.

The increasing number of old people, the ratio between old people and working age people, have created potentially anxious pressures on relations between generations, and, as a result, the further sustainability of pensions systems in our country. Actually and probably in the next future, increasing pressures exists between the number of pensioners and rentners, their numbers exceed those of the active contributors in the state social security budget. That means that the old age and survivors functions ensured by the public budget could not ensure for elderly persons, mainly for old women, the needed incomes for an adequate quality of life and well - being. Such conclusions could be obtained from the distribution of equalised incomes by components for elderly persons- old age women and men - and in the level of their expenditures and consumption structure.

Regarding the social protection expenditures from government contribution, which are slightly increased, shows that the largest share of social protection expenditures - for old age benefits - was assigned to the old age women and for survivors functions. It could be assumed that the medical care for the elderly persons rose either, mainly for old women. Although women are now living longer than men are, there remain disturbing inequalities in health status between genders. The specific mortality rates of old women and men, by causes of death, conclude that for old women the amount of medical care and social services - in case of sickness, disability - are higher than for old men.

It is very well known that a longer life expectancy is itself creating its own problems, especially such as a sharp rise in age related diseases (as chronic mental illness), which needs a higher social protection and a rising demand in social services and social care for older female dependants.

Another concern is focused on the issue regarding social insecurity, due to a negative tendency in crime and violence against elderly persons, mainly against old women, which are higher proportion of victims.

Based on the availability of statistical data information, more concerns were developed to analyse and evaluate the situation of elderly persons, from a gender point of view, the official statistics in our country make efforts to cover also such a new gender issue.

6. To achieve in best conditions the aims included in the Plan of Action on development and strengthening gender statistics - taking into account also the necessity to ensure international comparability of gender statistics, whose importance has become increasingly recognized, we consider very useful the activities deployed by the international bodies in this field and the growth of international co-operation focused on international standardization of statistics. This has led to a growing concern for the standardization of concepts and definitions, agreements on standardized classifications and statistical systems regarding gender.

Such common concerns and activities will be undoubtedly in the benefit of ensuring reliability and precision of the recorded and produced data and in ensuring their quality.

Another tickler is to secure the growth of the statistical capacity of the official statistics in order to achieve the objectives included in the Plan of Action. That needs the assurance of human and financial resources by the governmental bodies as well as the support bestowed by other national or international donors, including international organisations.

In such manner could be ensured the accomplishment of the strategic objectives included in the Plan form for Action of the Fourth World Conference of Women, in the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, and in the resolutions adopted in the last Special Sessions of the General Assembly (1999, 2000) for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the goals adopted by the Global UN Conferences and Summits of the '90 s.