**UGANDA ANNUAL GENDER STATISTICS CONFERENCE**

**14-17 NOVEMBER 2017, KAMPALA**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**By Ms. Ngone DIOP, Senior Gender Advisor, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa**

Her Excellency, Honorable Janat Mukawaya, Minister of Gender, Labor and Social Development of the Republic of Uganda,

Professor Bernabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor, Makerere University;

Mr. Ben Paul Mungyereza, Executive Director of the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics;

Directors of Ugandan Universities, research institutions, and the academia,

Representatives from Civil Society Organizations,

Distinguished participants,

All protocol observed,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), I would like to thank very much the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development of the Republic of Uganda and UNWOMEN for the invitation. I am indeed delighted and honored to be delivering the keynote addressat thisimportant Uganda Annual Gender Statistics Conference on the theme ***“Increasing demand and use of gender statistics in the Data system”***.

Allow me Distinguished Participants to congratulate Uganda for its high commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment, and more importantly, the important strides it has achieved on gender equality and women’s empowerment in general and in gender statistics,in particular. The numerous publications on gender statistics, such as the comprehensive reference document entitled *“****The gender equality indicators. Illuminating the path towards Gender equality in Uganda”*** *is a good testimony of such commitment and action.*

This Conference itself is another important testimony of the importance given to gender statistics by the government of Uganda. Congratulations again!

Distinguished participants,

The noble development objective and cause namely, ensuring that women and girls, men and boys participate in and benefit fully equitably from development processes, cannot be achieved unless their specific, situation, and indeed their specific **COINs** – Constraints, Options, Incentives and Needs - are fully recognized and reflected in policy making processes, that is, in the analysis of development issues, in the formulation of policy actions, in their effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation to track progress. Of particular importance is to ensure that such actions contribute to making positive and transformational changes in the lives of women and girls, men and boys in an equitable, inclusive and sustainable manner. And, such an impact should be measured, monitored and made visible. That is what the world Leaders, have called for.

Indeed, in 2015, under the auspices of the United Nations, 180 country heads of State and Government endorsed the global Agenda 2030 for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underpinned by the principle of inclusiveness, equity and innovation with the powerful mantra, “***leaving no one behind***”. Prior to that, Africa adopted its Common Position on the Post2015 that defined the continent’s priorities which were ultimately factored in the SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the importance of gender statistics cannot be over-emphasized. The availability of accurate gender statistics is the precondition to any actions towards achievement of the SDGs. That is why Agenda 2030 requires member States “to use sex-disaggregated data to track progress towards all goals including SDG5 which focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”.

The objective of this keynote address is not to revisit gender statistics as we have here in this room powerful voices and advocates of gender statistics.

My role is therefore, to set the scene, stimulate this high level policy dialogue around the demand and use of gender statistics for greater actions and equitable positive changes in the lives of women and girls, men and boys, in a sustainable manner.

It is therefore with great delight that I will provide an analytical outlook of key regional gender issues with some insights into the global perspective. I will do so from the gender statistics standpoint, by discussing challenges related to the availability and the use of gender statistics, essential to addressing those gender issues. I will conclude by shedding light on the opportunities (global and regional) that are before us to turn those challenges into greater actions and lasting equitable change in the lives of Africanwomen and girls, men and boys, and Ugandan’s in particular.

**{I have accompanied this keynote with supported by a number of graphs that will appear on the screen}**

Distinguished participants, Ladies and gentlemen,

The very first step in dealing with gender statistics is to get the conceptual dimension and conceptual underpinning right.

Gender statistics refer to statistics that adequately reflect differences and inequality in the situation of women and men in all areas of life (United Nations, 2006).Statistics related to individuals are collected, compiled, analyzed and presented by sex and age and reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society (United Nations, 1996). This makes it clear distinguished participants, that gender statistics are not statistics on and for women only. They reflect the situations of both gender in an analytical manner.

It is worth noting that gender statistics should also reflect the differential situations of different demographic and socio-economic groups (for instance issue of age). Here, the life cycle approach is critical to understanding the different trajectories of women and men, from childhood trough the working age and reproductive stage to older stage.

Therefore, the question we need to ask ourselves is where does Africa stand? How far our continent has come in realizing the vision of gender equality and women’s empowerment? And how does the situation of the production and use of gender statistics, which are critical to achieving such noble development goal look like. Are we there? If not, what it takes to be there? As you can see, one cannot discuss gender statistics without tackling gender issues and vice versa. Both are interlinked policy issues with profound policy implications.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the critical milestones of the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action was the strong call for action and demand for gender statistics to be adopted as a guiding framework and a policy action tool in order to make visible the invisible, to bring to the fore what tends to be considered as marginal issues, that can be added on, after thinking of and making policy choices. No need to say that such belief has been and still being challengedstrongly. Paragraph 206 of the Beijing Platform requests***“national, regional and international statistical services to ensure that statistics related to individuals are collected, compiled, analyzed and presented by sex and age and reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society (United Nations, 1996).***

Almost 22 years after the landmark Beijing Platform for Action, African has made important strides in investing in the availability and use of gender responsive data in order to analyze and respond to gender issues. Uganda is indeed a good example.

However, the pace and path of progress are slow, and indeed uneven. Not only a number of structural gender issues remain pervasive, in addition, the gaps in gender statistics remain wide.This trend is worldwide but it is exacerbated by the combination of many factors which I intend to revisit, though in a concise manner.

A recent World Bank assessment of gender statistics found that globally close to **80%** of countries regularly produce sex disaggregated statistics on the following issues: maternal mortality, labor participation and training. But less than one third of countries disaggregated statistics by sex on (1) informal employment, entrepreneurship, especially ownership and management of a firm or business, unpaid care work and violence against”[[1]](#footnote-2).

Distinguished participants,

Such a situation is of a big concern because it points to at least two policy issues. First, thoseissues i.e. violence against women, unpaid care work, informal sector, entrepreneurship which are overlooked by our national statistical systems are the most pressing gender issues and violation of women’s and girls’ rights.

Second, the lack of gender statistics to measure and respond to those issues is a reflection of the little attention given to the latter.

 It is not surprising that VAW is pervasive in Africa. The AU 2016 Gender Scorecard suggests that of 23 countries for which data are available, 14 have very high VAW prevalence rate estimated between 30% and 54%. These countries include Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Mali, Gabon, Mozambique, Tanzania, Congo Democratic Republic, Uganda, Cameroon and Zimbabwe, while Equatorial Guinea accounts for a very high prevalence rate of 54%.

Not only VAW violates women’s and girls’ basic human rights and hamper their physical and mental health, it addition, it is costlyto the continent’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), between 1 to 12%.[[2]](#footnote-3)

The story behind VAW and its consequences are therefore hidden, invisible, leading to a transmission of the pandemic through generations. What can be called the violence trap due to an intergeneration transmission of violence.

Another sector where accurate gender statistics are lacking is the informal sector–The ECA’s study on “Women in the Informal Employment in Africa. Addressing the inequality trap”[[3]](#footnote-4),suggests that74% of African womenare concentrated in the informal sector, the highest of the world, with South Asia. In its study on the theme “, ECA points to the double discriminations facing women, namely, those related to gender differentials that often affect more women and girls, men and boys. In addition, women and girls face challenges inherent in the nature of the informal sector such as poor working conditions, lack of social protection and social security, low pay, job insecurity, sexual harassment, among others.

Many African countries do not collect gender statistics on the informal sector. The implication of such situation is that women and girls’ constraints and needs are not documented nor analyzed, and therefore, no policies, programmes are developed, implemented to address them.

The issue of unpaid care work is a defining development challenge and a crucial policy issue on our continent. Work performed free of charge, mostly by women and girls to care for and maintain members of the communities and families, unpaid care work is not documented in the majority of African countries, nor is it counted for. Studies have found that women in Sub-Saharan Africa spend about 40 billion hours a year collecting water.[[4]](#footnote-5) In countries like Guinea and Malawi, women spend respectively over three and eight times more than men fetching water.

African households’ limited access to electrify further exacerbates women’s burden of unpaid care work and environmental degradation. The Africa Energy Outlook, 2014 found that more than 620 million people in Sub-Sahara Africa live without electricity and nearly 730 million people rely on dangerous, inefficient source of energy such as biomass affecting their health and the environment through greenhouse emissions.[[5]](#footnote-6)

The daunting policy issue is that unpaid care work poses lot of constraints and trade off to women and girls because they would only be able to engage in education, training and economic opportunities after they have performed such work. Failing to carry out time use statistics to understand the magnitude of the issue means that many African governments (the large majority) do not have the information needed to respond to the underlying causal factors and thus to address them.

**What about the gender issues for which gender statistics are available? What do the gender statistics tell us and what they don’t tell us?**

Ladies and Gentlemen, let’s have a look on the gender issues for which gender statistics are often available namely education, health, women’s political participation and or women in national Parliaments. What do the statistics tell us and what they don’t tell us (SEESUPPORTING PP on DATA AND GRAPHS)

For instance, with regards to education, available statistics suggest that gender inequality has narrowed at education level where many countries have by far achieved gender equality, with some times girls surpassing boys. But the proportion shrinks as you move to the next level with few girls and women reaching secondary and tertiary levels in many countries. The situation is worth in STEMs where women and girls represent only 12%.

So what is the untold story, which often gender statistics don’t tell us? While quantitative statistics provide good information on the gender gaps, often they do not capture the underlying causes of such gaps. And understanding such causes is essential to addressing the gaps. The combination of quantitative and qualitative gender statistics is essential to have the full picture of gender issues and inform policy choices and change.

Distinguished participants,

The above analysis of selected gender issues against the availability of accurate gender statistics makes it very clear that though a lot has been done in Africa, including here in Uganda, challenges are not only enormous, in addition, they persist.

This call for important actions and my key message is “if we are serious about gender equality and about bringing positive change in the lives of all women and girls on the continent”, this leaving no one behind, we need to take actions and now.

**ACTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS**

I therefore would like us to consider the following actions:

First, is to institutionalize gender statistics in a systemic (across the national statistics systems) and systematic, that is in a consistent and well organized manner.

Related to that is the need to deconstruct mainstreamed gender bias such as the concept of work. The neoclassical definition of work refers to activities that are remunerated whereas the important unpaid care work is not recognized as productive work. We have already discussed above the important impact of unpaid carework on the formation of countries’ human capital.

**So what are the opportunities (global and regional)?**

**Opportunities**: the new international definition of employment and work as part of the Labor Statistics standards adopted by the 2013 International Conference of Labor Statisticians which makes clear distinction between “employment” which generates paid income for the households and “work” which includes unpaid activitiessuch as household chores and production for own consumption. This distinction has important implications for measuring gender gaps in employment and for especially for measuring and valuing unpaid care work.

Yet, under the auspices of the United Nations (Department of Statistics) a number of forward looking initiatives have been launched including the new International Classification for Time Use Statistics (ICATUS). The Global Gender Statistics Programme led by the United Nations Statistical Commission, being implemented by the UN Statistical Division and coordinated by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) which mandate is to review progress and provide guidance on feature activities geared at advancing gender statistics.

Another important global initiative is the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Project, which implementation is being led by the Statistics Department of the United Nations. The programme aims to accelerate existing efforts to generate comprehensive gender indicators on health, education, employment, entrepreneurship, asset ownership. Remember, those are sectors for which gender statistics are really lacking as analyzed earlier. To support countries and all stakeholders, guidelines on collecting data on asset ownership at the individual level (and not household) level and on gender and entrepreneurship were developed. The guidelines address conceptual and measurement issues. They were tested in five countries namely Georgia, Mexico, Mongolia, Philippine and guess what, and in Uganda, the sole African country included in the pilot phase. That itself is an important signal which should encourage Uganda even more.

So it is very clear that gender statistics is among the top priorities at international level.

At regional level, the ECA, AfDB and African Development Bank, and the African Union Commission are spearheading measures to position gender statistics at the center of Africa’s priorities. In so doing. At the request of the AUC former Chairperson, ECA conceptualized and produce the African Gender Scorecard since 2015. The Scorecard is an easy to use policy action tool that targets Heads of State and Government by providing them with insights into their countries’ achievements on gender equality and women’sempowerment. Moreover, the Scorecard is an accountability tool and heads of States and governments are held responsible. An Award was given to those Heads of State and Governments based on their country performance.

The success of the first edition of the Scorecard (in 2015) attracted AfDB in 2016 and UNFPA in 2017 resulting in a strong synergic partnership to support a vision of positive change in African countries through and with the political clout of the African Union.

Furthermore, in 2004, ECA developed the African Gender and Developed (AGDI) which has been implemented in more than 30 countries. In 2015, AFDB came up with a Gender Index, almost similar to the AGDI. Both institutions are working towards a joint index.

Moreover, Africa is currently embarked in the Data Revolution initiative with the overarching goal to providing governments with more and better data to inform their decisions but also to be held accountable by their citizens. Such initiative offers an unprecedented opportunity to launch and achieve a gender data revolution.

Distinguished participants,

There is no need to say that things are moving at regional and global level. Not only strong interventions were made and powerful normative products developed and are available from various sources, the implementation of the latter are being done and taken seriously.

So what has Uganda done to seize those many opportunities fully? How is Uganda translating its commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment into actions and what change,**evidence-based change** (reflected by gender statistics) is being made and felt? Those are, the key questions that need to be responded to in the Conference. The power of action, the desire to change, to make meaningful impact on the lives of the many women and girls in this country, is without any doubt, a central priority.

I am so eager to hear the breakthrough work you have been doing to institutionalize gender statistics in a systemic and systematic manner. But before I handover to you, allow to leave you with the following reminders:

1. Collecting gender statistics is far from being enough. In addition, information gathered and analyzed as to be widely disseminated to all stakeholders, at all levels irrespective their location, their social and economic status;
2. Avoid isolation of gender statistics, they are part and parcel of national statistics systems. This means the whole statistical processes i.e. from the conceptualization of the instruments, data collection and analysis to the dissemination and use of the data;
3. Need to create the demand of statistics and support their effective use for policy influence
4. Document, document and document your experiences, success stories, failures, etc. it is only that way you can make lasting change that not only you will be proud of, but more importantly a change that can be felt by women and men, boys and girls, equitable, a change that is visible, measured and celebrated for Ugandan and for Africa.

Congratulations for all the breakthrough work done and the important progress you have made.

I thank you for your very kind attention.

1. World Bank, 2016, “More and better data. A powerful tool for improving lives” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. ECA-UNWOMEN Study on the “Socio-economic costs of violence against women in Africa”, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Ngone Diop and Iris Macculi, 2015 “Women in Informal Employment in Africa. Addressing the Inequality Trap”. A background paper for the ECA African Social Development Report [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. The African Energy Outlook, Special Report in the World Energy Outlook, 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)