

From Margins to Mainstream
From Gender Statistics to Engendering Statistical Systems

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I. Origins of Gender Statistics

UNIFEM and its partners, particularly the Statistics Division of UN with initial technical support from Statistics Sweden, have been working on gender statistics in the Asia-Pacific region for more than a decade. During that period, in line with global developments on gender statistics, our understanding of gender statistics and their uses and users has changed and developed. As elsewhere, the initial work focused primarily on statistics on women and a number of countries produced booklets on Women in Statistics that primarily confined themselves to presenting data on women¹. However, it was soon recognized that the situation of women could be adequately described and analyzed only in relation to the comparative situation of men. As a result, the focus moved from statistics on women to statistics on women and men, and the booklets published from the UNIFEM-UN-ESCAP regional project covering six countries in South and Southeast Asia and UNIFEM projects in Indonesia and China were all entitled Women and Men in [Country].

Globally, the history of gender statistics goes back to the First World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975, which first recognized the importance of producing statistics on women, a call that was echoed at the Second World Conference in Copenhagen in 1980. By the time of the Third World Conference in Nairobi in 1985, the international statistical system had initiated some work in this area, including training programmes to strengthen the cooperation between policy makers and data producers. Statistics Sweden was one of the first statistical offices in the world to designate specific staff to work on gender statistics, starting in 1983. It was the Nairobi World Conference that also marked the major watershed between the focus on statistics on women and work on gender statistics. By the time of the Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995, many national statistical offices and international agencies had prepared user-friendly publications on statistics on women and men that were using the new approach of “gender statistics”. Among them were booklets on Women and Men in China and Women and Men in Indonesia produced, published and distributed by the respective national statistics offices with funding from UNIFEM.

II. What are Gender Statistics?

Much of the general agreement today that exists on the definition of gender statistics derives from the leading role played by Statistics Sweden in promoting gender statistics nationally and in promoting the development of gender statistics globally through technical support funded through the Swedish development assistance agency SIDA and its collaboration with other national statistics bodies in the Nordic countries and the Economic Committee for Europe (ECE). Most sources² agree on three primary requirements for gender statistics:

¹ Several developed countries continue to label their statistical publications on gender as statistics on women, although the content includes gendered comparisons between statistics on women and men. For example, the main Australian publication is entitled “Women in Australia”. However, others have changed in line with developing countries. For example, the 1994 UK Social Focus on Women (which did include sex-disaggregated data) had become the Social Focus on Women and Men by 1998.

² For example, see Joann Vanek, 13 Gender Statistics, Chapter 13 Course on Gender Statistics for Social Policy, 1999, UNSD; Linda Murgatroyd, “Developing gender statistics in the UK”, Radical Statistics, No. 074, 2000; Statistics Sweden, “Work to Improve Gender Statistics in Sweden”, Working Paper 16, Conference of European Statisticians, Statistical Commission for Economic Commission of Europe, October 2000;

1. all statistics on individuals should be collected, collated and presented disaggregated by sex;
2. all variables and characteristics should be analyzed by and presented with sex as a primary and overall classification³;
3. specific efforts should be made to identify gender issues and to ensure that data addressing these are collected and made available.

The Statistics Sweden publication *Engendering Statistics*⁴ also identifies as components of gender statistics work [page 11]

1. formulation of concepts and definitions used in data collection that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men . . . and capture all aspects of their lives; and
2. development of data collection methods that take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that might produce gender biases.

However, few agencies working on gender statistics have emphasized these issues and few countries, particularly developing countries, have systematically addressed them.⁵

The requirement to undertake *specific efforts* to identify gender issues arises because statistics are needed for topics that may be of greater relevance to one sex than the other, and to take into account the fact that policies and programmes may have differential impacts on women and men that therefore need to be monitored separately. Until recently and almost universally, the majority of decision makers involved in identifying data requirements and developing national statistical systems have been men. Thus men's concerns, needs and lifestyles are better represented in current statistics than women's. The Swedish approach to gender statistics relies primarily on user-producer dialogues to identify gender issues on which data are not available and on the national statistical offices to address such data gaps. Such workshops were conducted in most of the countries supported by Statistics Sweden or, in the Asia-Pacific region, UNIFEM and a user-producer working group produced national reports on gender issues and data gaps, as well as in most cases a national plan to address the gaps. However most, countries have focused their gender statistics work on one or two specific gender issues, such as violence against women or women's unpaid labour – often in response to the demands of women's lobby groups (particularly on violence) rather than to user-producer dialogues⁶.

As a result, even a superficial review of work on gender statistics –including in countries such as Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom that have most strongly promoted their use at the national and international levels - suggests that in practice, work on gender statistics has been largely confined to social, demographic and

3 This means that it is not sufficient to present just one census table showing the population disaggregated by sex. All tables – population by education, labour force by occupation, economic activity etc – must be disaggregated by sex in addition to all other variables of interest.

4 Birgitta Hedman, Fransesca Perucci, Pehr Sundström, *Engendering Statistics. A Tool for Change*, Statistics Sweden, 1996.

5 A recent exception is the national statistics offices in India and Nepal, which both implemented systematic and comprehensive approaches to engender the 2001 round of the national census.

6 While formal and informal user-producer dialogues are the norm in many statistical systems, they typically involve the national statistics office and users of a specific data collection instrument, such as a census or household survey, and focus on the inclusion of specific questions and variables and the tabulations to be produced.

labour force statistics⁷. In 2000 Linda Murgatroyd, Statistics Head of Profession at the Cabinet Office and an active member of the group publishing the journal *Radical Statistics*, suggested that:

“The term gender statistics itself is not very useful except as a shorthand to refer to statistics relating to people or activities with a significant gender dimension. Potentially these cover the majority of statistics with a social content⁸”

Not surprisingly, most of the sources cited for the gender statistics booklets *Women and Men* are limited to Censuses and household and labour force surveys.

III. Gender Statistics are Disaggregated by Sex!

However, the move from the focus on statistics on women to a broader comparative focus on gender statistics on women and men brought with it a confusion in terminology that persists to this day. Joann Vanek noted in 1999 the need to distinguish between the terms gender and sex “as these two words have often been wrongly used synonymously”. However, the incorrect terms “gender disaggregation” or “disaggregated by gender” continue to be widely used and to confuse those who were taught during gender training (sometimes by the same people now mis-using the terms) that sex and gender are quite different concepts.

Sex refers to biological differences between women and men. Sex characteristics are universal across all societies and unchangeable among individuals and societies⁹. By contrast, gender refers to socio-cultural differences and social relationships between women and men that can change, over time for the same individual, and differ within and among societies. In the English language, it is helpful to think of the terms female and male as referring to sex differences, and feminine and masculine as referring to gender differences¹⁰. Since gender stereotyping can change from the perspective of the observer¹¹, gender is not a very useful category for defining statistics or statistical variables: gender statistics are disaggregated by sex and not by gender.

However, the confusion arises because there is a close link between sex and gender in everyday life. One of the main reasons for our interest in sex-disaggregated data is its capacity to reveal sex differences in the characteristics of women and men or girls and boys at a particular point in time, such as their average labour force participation rate or level of education, that are the result of gender differences in their lives. For example, women’s lower labour force participation rates, or girls’ lower enrolment rates shown by sex-disaggregated data are the result of women’s different gender roles (women are more likely than men to stay out of the labour force to care for children) or of gender stereotypes (parents may be less willing to educate

7 See for example, the Thailand National Statistics Office website
<http://www.nso.go.th/eng/stat/gender/gender.htm>

8 Linda Murgatroyd, “Developing gender statistics in the UK”, *Radical Statistics*, No. 074, 2000

9 Even “sex-change” operations do not change the underlying genetic determinants of sex.

10 Feminine, for example, refers to characteristics that are associated with members of the female sex in terms of our expectations. They are “gender stereotypes” but are not necessarily confined to members of the female sex. Thus, caring for small babies is commonly regarded as a feminine “gender” role and “nurturing” as a feminine gender characteristic. However, some men also care for babies, even as primary caregivers. By contrast, the ability to give birth or to breastfeed is confined to members of the female sex and is thus a sex characteristic.

11 One person may regard an assertive manner as “(inappropriately) masculine” in a woman, while another may regard it positively as an indication of empowerment.

girls if they expect their daughters to “marry out” and their sons to support them in old age).

IV. A New Approach

Conspicuously absent from the booklets are economic data beyond that derived from these three sources. In 1999, Joann Vanek of the UN Statistics Division noted work on the System of National Accounts (SNA) as an important gap and problem area for gender statistics¹². Marilyn Waring, much earlier and with great flair, had identified the gender biases in the national accounts in her widely circulated book *Counting for Nothing*¹³. Building on Marilyn’s work, the recent upsurge in work on time-use surveys and increased recognition of the implications of the 1993 revision of the SNA production boundary – commonly referred to as the “extended production boundary” in contrast to the earlier “conventional” 1968 boundary – have raised awareness of the extent to which even gender statistics have failed to fully address the need to identify and provide data to address gender issues.

UNIFEM had been collaborating with the Statistics Division over more than a decade and with both the Division and the UNDP regional gender project Asia-Pacific Gender Equity Network (UNDP-APGEN) on the utilization of the time use data that is increasingly being collected by countries in the Asia-Pacific region¹⁴ in policy development. The time use work and particularly that of Indira Hirway¹⁵ on India had drawn increasing attention to the issue of the under-enumeration of women’s unpaid work in general in the national accounts, and the specific exclusion in most countries of consideration of work in the extended production boundary of the 1993 revision to the SNA, since the revision has been largely unimplemented throughout the region, particularly in developing countries.

The Statistics Office of the Ministry of Planning and Finance from new nation of Timor Leste requested technical support from the Statistics Division of UN-ESCAP in establishing a national statistical system. After discussions with the Statistics Office and the Statistics Division, it was agreed that this offered an opportunity for more systematic work on engendering the new statistical system as a whole, particularly economic statistics and the national accounts. This new area of “gendered statistics” will move the concept of gender statistics from the margins of a limited impact on social, demographic and labour force statistics (in terms of sex disaggregation and adding data on gender issues) into the mainstream of national statistical systems as a whole.

1. Engendering National Statistical Systems

The concept of engendering national statistical systems goes beyond the conventional approach to gender statistics in two ways:

1. It recognizes that merely disaggregating data from conventional censuses and surveys by sex is insufficient because the data collection framework and instruments themselves are gender biased. What is required is a thorough

¹² Joann Vanek, *ibid.*

¹³ Marilyn Waring, *Counting For Nothing: What Men Value and What Women are Worth*, Bridget Williams Books, 1993

¹⁴ These include a major pilot survey in India providing representative data at the state level for six states, a national time use module in the 1999 Labour Force Survey of Nepal, pilot surveys in Philippines and Mongolia, 2000, national surveys in the Republic of Korea 1997, New Zealand 1999, Australia 1992 & 1997, Japan 2000, and Thailand 2001.

¹⁵ Indira Hirway, “Gender Approach to the Collection and Use of Data: The Time Allocation Component”, draft, UNIFEM, 2002.

review of the data collection framework and process from a gender perspective and a systematic engendering of each specific data collection instrument.

2. It recognizes the need for a more systematic approach to identifying gender issues and providing data that genuinely addresses women's needs and priorities in the area of economic statistics, in particular engendering data collection for the System of National Accounts (SNA), as well as the conceptual framework within which the SNA is used.

2. Engendering the census and survey data collection process

UNIFEM South Asia in collaboration with other UN Agencies supported the Central Statistical Organization India and the Central Bureau of Statistics Nepal in a pioneering effort to put in place systematic and comprehensive processes to engender the 2001 round of the national censuses in those countries.

As part of the process of engendering the 2001 Census, the Central Bureau of Statistics Nepal, working in consultation with and supported by the UN Inter-agency Group and other donors divided their planning of the process of engendering into three stages: pre-enumeration; enumeration and post-enumeration. They identified eleven areas of work to be covered: cartographic work; establishment of committees; Designing and preparation of sample design, questionnaires and instruction manuals; conducting the pilot census; printing materials; preparation of a tabulation plan; establishment of field offices; recruitment of field staff; training of field staff; publicity campaign and field enumeration. Four Committees were established to oversee the work: Questionnaire and manual preparation committee; Media core group; Project management committee and Occupation and industry classification committee¹⁶.

India similarly established a National Core Group for Census 2001 initiated by the Department of Women and Child Development of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This was also supported by UN agencies: UNIFEM and UNFPA were members of the Core Group, together with the Planning Commission and the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University. The Core Group met several times to agree on recommendations for engendering the Census that were then put to a broadly-based meeting of academics, experts and representatives of Government departments, which then forwarded them to the Registrar General of India for incorporation in planning for the Census.

Based on their experience and work from some developed countries, engendering data collection processes and instruments involves, among other things:

- *reviewing the conceptual basis of data collection and the questionnaire.*

The National Core Group for Census 2001 India devised the use of probing questions to better identify and count working women, and also removed male bias in the language used in the instruction manuals for data collection.

Prior to the Census, the Nepal Labour Force Survey 1999 had already eliminated the use of the traditional labour force questions requiring the respondent to determine whether individuals were in the workforce, thus avoiding the terminology issue completely¹⁷. (Indonesia had discarded the traditional approach during the 1980s). Such questions tend to lead to under-enumeration of female labour force participation because male heads of households – and sometimes women

16 UNIFEM South Asia Regional Office supported the operation of the Committees during 1999 and 2000.

17 With increasing use of computers, there is really no need for such questions. Classification of the population by economic activity status can be easily carried out by computer during data presentation.

themselves – do not regard many (particularly unpaid) women’s activities as work, even when those activities would technically be considered work under the definitions being employed in the survey.

The UK Census, although not subject to such an intense or comprehensive scrutiny of gender issues, did change the language of the questionnaire in response to advocacy by women’s groups. In a change that represented a shift in thinking about women’s domestic work and child care, the term “economically inactive” to describe women who were not classified as in the workforce was removed from the census form. Women had objected to its continued use because it implied that such activities were not economic and not productive.

- *reviewing coding and classification systems and terminologies.*

For the 2001 Census, Nepal also established an Occupation and Industry Classification Committee to review gender bias in the classifications to be used. As a result, the Committee produced a new NSCO and NSCI codes for occupation and industry that provided more detailed four digit gender-sensitive breakdowns for women and men.

The Core Group in India focused on defining women’s work to cover non-market production on farms, in households and in animal husbandry, and expanding the existing classification system to cover various categories of female non-workers and separate data tabulations on single working women from those on female-headed households.

The United Kingdom developed a more gender-sensitive classification system for socio-economic status and also provided a more detailed breakdown of economic activities normally carried out by women (which had previously tended to be provided only at a rather aggregated level)¹⁸.

Like several other countries, the UK also eliminated the use of the concept “head of household”, replacing it with the term “household reference person”.

- *gender training for all personnel involved in data collection, including enumerators and supervisors and the development of appropriate training modules and materials for this purpose.*

For example, the process of engendering the Nepal Census 2001 involved Gender Orientation Workshops for management of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), followed by another for middle-level management. A public workshop for a variety of stakeholders was also held on Mainstreaming gender in 2001 Census. Gender training was also conducted for all field personnel. The 2001 Census of India also involved extensive gender sensitization training, in collaboration with training institutions and relevant government agencies, for enumerators, district and state officials and master trainers.

- *media campaigns to communicate specific gender messages directly to potential respondents.*

Nepal organized a workshop on Development of a Media Strategy and Campaigning organized with CBS, UNIFEM and UNICEF. The Working Group produced publicity materials (a telefilm and poster) focusing on gender-specific terminologies and questions included in the census schedules. In India, a media strategy focuses on the definition of “work” and the issue of enumeration and under-enumeration of women in the census.

18 Linda Murgatroyd, “Developing gender statistics in the UK”, Radical Statistics, No. 074, 2000

- *a deliberate policy of recruiting more women as enumerators.*

In some developing countries, the use of women enumerators has been found to lead to significant increases in the enumeration of women's labour force participation. Nepal recruited women to fill 20 per cent of enumerator posts and 10 per cent of supervisor posts for the 2001 Census, a significant increase on past levels.

- *reviewing and revising tabulations and data presentation and dissemination.*

In addition to reviewing the standard output of the Census, UNIFEM South Asia assisted CBS Nepal to develop an additional set of tables that specifically addressed gender issues. CBS plans to bring out a separate publication presenting these tabulations – linking, for example, sex of household head with female ownership of assets and livestock, and sex of outmigrant by various household characteristics.

3. Engendering data collection for the SNA

The Swedish approach to engendering statistics,¹⁹ relies on dialogues between users and producers and internal quality review processes within Statistics Sweden to identify gender issues and ensure the provision of data that addresses them. However, user-producer dialogues primarily involve the national statistics office (NSO) and the users of its data, which is heavily social in content since NSOs are primarily responsible for censuses and surveys. In particular the entire framework of the National Accounts, which provides the data base for most economic policy decision making, largely lies outside the scope of such user-producer dialogues and thus outside current work on gender statistics.

Much of the data used to prepare the National Accounts are provided by a variety of other sources, particularly administrative statistics and special surveys, which in many countries are carried out by departments such as agriculture, industry and commerce. Other producers of economic data include businesses and firms, banks and the financial system in general. Engendering the collection and use of this data opens up an entirely new area of work that has hardly been touched to date. UNIFEM, the Statistics Division of UN-ESCAP and the Central Bureau of Statistics, Indonesia, are currently supporting the Statistics Office of Timor Leste to develop the national statistical system of this new country from a gender perspective.

Among the sources of data involved in the preparation of the SNA are:

- business accounts, income taxation returns, VAT and other taxation records, other administrative data (for example, local government records on building and construction);
- balance of payments statistics – imports, exports, etc
- government finance statistics – government revenues and expenditures;
- money and banking statistics;
- price statistics – used for valuation of goods and services;
- population and labour force data from censuses and household surveys;
- agriculture and industry censuses and establishment surveys.

Despite the intimidating thickness of the official manual on the System of National Accounts 1993, the national accounts of small developing countries are often

¹⁹ Birgitta Hedman, Francesca Perucci and Perh Sundström, *Engendering Statistics: A Tool for Change*, Statistics Sweden, 1996

relatively simple, partly due to the lack of data. However, they are also simple because they largely cover only the monetised market economy, which forms the smaller part of the real economy of in the poorer developing countries.

This in itself is a fundamental gender issue, since it is men and the goods and services produced by men and often largely meeting men's needs that form the major part of the market economy in many poor countries. The extended production boundary of the 1993 revision of the SNA partly addresses this gender issue. However, the majority of countries have not yet implemented the extended production boundary. This is particularly true of poor countries, even although the extended boundary is of most relevance to these countries.

V. What is needed to engender the SNA?

This is largely new territory and we do not yet have all – or even many – of the answers to this challenging question. However, some changes are obvious:

1. Making women's economic roles and contributions visible to policy makers by improving enumeration of women's labour force participation according to current definitions by:
 - systematic efforts to engender existing data collection instruments along the lines adopted by Nepal and India for the 2001 census;
 - developing new approaches to enumerating women's labour force participation in the "hard to capture" sectors such as home work and the informal sector in general²⁰;
2. Modifying existing and developing new data collection methods to measure unpaid work as defined by the extended production boundary defined under the 1993 revision to the SNA;
3. Where feasible and appropriate, countries should work toward implementation of the revised SNA through the development of satellite accounts, particularly through collaboration with the Statistics Division of UN-ESCAP in implementing its work plan to operationalize the 1993 revision to the SNA in the region.

Given the technical difficulties and methodological issues involved in preparing satellite accounts, and the importance for poor countries in particular, of obtaining and using data on the roles of women and the poor within the extended production boundary, UNIFEM believes it is vital to separate the collection of data for the extended boundary from the preparation of satellite accounts. As is apparent from the number of developing countries that have undertaken time use surveys, counting and thus making visible the economic contribution of women and the poor other aspects of their lives within the extended production boundary is not beyond the resources of even poor countries. By contrast, and not surprisingly, the preparation of satellite accounts has been largely confined to developed countries.

4. Support the development and use by policy makers of appropriate conceptual frameworks to incorporate the improved data base on women's economic contribution in policy analysis, policy formulation and policy monitoring and evaluation.

20 See Maria Floro, A Gender Approach to the Collection and Use of Statistics on Homework, UNIFEM, 2002; Nirmala Banerjee, Gender-Sensitive Statistical Measures for the Informal Sector, UNIFEM, 2002; UNIFEM, A Gender Approach to the Collection and Use of Statistics for the Informal Sector, Homework and Time Allocation Studies, Paper presented to the 13th Session, Regional Statistics Committee, UN-ESCAP, 27 November 2002.

5. Initiate new dialogues between gender advocates, users of national accounts – particularly economic policy analysts and decision makers - and staff in sectors and agencies that provide the administrative data used in preparation of national accounts in order to engender these data collection processes.

In some countries, such as Indonesia, previous work on gender statistics in the region rather accidentally brought into the user-producer dialogues sector staff who were meant to represent users but were actually sectoral producers of statistics. This led to broader dialogues on the producer side, although most of the sectors represented were from social sectors – health, education, religious affairs, justice and labour.

More work needs to be done to bring into the dialogues those responsible for economic data such as trade statistics, price statistics, business and production statistics in order to begin the process of identifying gender issues and gender gaps in these areas, as well as gender biases that may arise from the ways in which such data are used.

VI. Why is it important to engender the SNA?

In describing the uses of the SNA, the official manual provides strong justification for engendering the SNA:

“The SNA is a multi-purpose system . . . designed for economic analysis, decision-taking and policy-making, whatever the industrial structure or stage of economic development of a country”²¹

Among the specific uses identified by the manual are: analysing and evaluating the performance of an economy, monitoring the behaviour of an economy in terms of major economic flows (production, household consumption, government consumption, capital formation, exports, imports, wages, profits, lending and borrowing etc), macroeconomic analysis, economic policy making and decision-taking and international comparisons. Women clearly have important interests in all of these areas - interests and priorities that may be different from those of men.

1. Women's roles & economic contributions are excluded from the policy data base

Currently, not only are women's concerns and priorities largely absent from these uses of the SNA, women's contributions to the economic production and wealth of economies are largely excluded from the data that provide the basis for preparation of national accounts. Although the extent is greater in some countries and cultures than others, women's labour force participation even as defined by existing standards, is widely under-enumerated by existing methodologies²². The large differences in women's labour force participation rates between countries such as Thailand and Indonesia have more to do with perceptions about women's roles and the way in which household heads (and even women themselves) report women's activities than with real differences in the extent to which women in the two countries actually participate in economic activity. This is also evident in the differences between the socialist countries such as Vietnam and China, which under the influence of communist theory implemented major ideological campaigns emphasizing that all citizens contributed to the revolutionary effort. The very large

21 System of National Accounts 1993, Commission of the European Communities – Eurostat, IMF, OECD, UN and World Bank, 1993: 1.29.

22 Concern over the unbelievably low rates recorded by conventional censuses and surveys in India was one of the motivations for the pilot time use surveys in six states.

differences in women's labour force participation rates before and after their socialist revolutions were also related to real increases in women's economic contributions due to the extent to which the State subsidized and supported women's reproductive roles with state kitchens and crèches that enabled women to devote more time to economic activity. However, the fact that the high levels of women's labour force participation continue to hold during the post reform era²³, suggests that the differences also reflected significant changes in perceptions and the way in which women's activities were and are reported.

2. The lives of the poor, particularly women, are excluded from the policy data base

It is not only women's work and reality that is excluded from existing data bases. Many of the economic activities and coping strategies of the poor, both as producers and as consumers, are excluded from the current national accounts data base. Gender is inextricably linked to poverty and poverty, particularly in the short term and among vulnerable groups but also – as is evident in the case of Argentina – even in the long term, may be a consequence of macroeconomic policies such as liberalization and privatization.

Poverty causes households to adopt coping strategies in both the short and long term that involve moving the meeting of basic needs from market to non-market activities, which are likely to involve an increase in the unpaid labour of women and girls. For example, the substitution of foods purchase in the market (with cash incomes that may have been earned by women or men) by home-grown foods that are often produced primarily with the labour of women and girls. In extremes and depending on cultural patterns, poverty is also associated with unequal sharing of consumption, a larger share of food being given to men and boys either because they are the primary income earners or simply due to cultural gender biases²⁴. Either or both of these coping strategies may also be associated with increasing barriers to education for girls. Such shifts will not be apparent from the data available to macro economic policy makers and thus the health and nutritional consequences for women and girls will probably not become apparent to policy makers in time to avoid permanent effects with a significant impact on the quality of human resources.

Policy decisions based on data that excludes much of the lives and contributions of more than half the population, in the case of women, or of its most vulnerable members, in the case of the poor, cannot provide optimum results for those whose lives are excluded or for the nation as a whole. Thus, engendering the SNA, as part of the process of engendering economic decision-making in general and macroeconomic decision-making in particular, must be a priority, both for women and for nations.

23 Women made up more than half of the total workforce in most sectors and all of the economic sectors in Vietnam even in 1996.

24 Often the latter, since women working in the informal sector are often the primary breadwinners in poor households.