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Knowledge Briefs on **Gender** and **CRVS**

Brief 1, Paper 3

Harnessing CRVS Systems for the Gender-Related SDGs – Opportunities and Challenges

Photo: Dominic Chavez/World Bank

KEY MESSAGES

- **Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems play a crucial role in helping countries measure and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, with particular importance for gender-related SDGs. 28% of the SDG indicators depend directly or indirectly on CRVS data or would be improved through the use of CRVS-derived data, while 34 out of the 54 gender-related SDG indicators identified by UN Women benefit from data provided by CRVS systems.

- **The increased demand for CRVS data created by the SDGs should lead to increased political and financial support for data systems**, which, in turn, will make higher quality data available for use. This process presents an opportunity for transformative improvement to gender-specific data, which would allow gender to catch up to more advanced data sectors such as macroeconomics and health.

- **Well-functioning CRVS systems are not merely inputs for measuring SDGs but are goals within the 2030 Agenda themselves.** SDG target 16.9 calls on countries to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, while SDG target 17.19 includes a commitment to support statistical capacity building in developing countries.

- **Well-functioning CRVS systems have disproportionately positive benefits for women and girls** because vital statistics provide sex-disaggregated demographic data on key issues like population distribution and maternal mortality. Civil registration also ensures that women and girls can prove their own identities to access crucial public services such as health, education, social protection and political representation.

- **While long-term development of CRVS systems should continue, national statistical offices should take immediate steps to improve CRVS data availability**, increase demand and expand the base of users by adhering to open data practices and data interoperability guidelines. These CRVS improvements benefit the state by strengthening administrative systems within a country and helping to meet the legally binding obligation to register vital life events.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development place unprecedented statistical demands on national and international statistical agencies. The task of measuring the indicators identified by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) falls on the global statistical community, stretching the community's resources and requiring greater capacity to manage the increased demand for data and statistics. The IAEG-SDGs identified a set of 232 indicators monitoring 169 targets among 17 goals – a massive increase from the previous Millennium Development Goals (IAEG-SDGs 2018). As a result, national and international statistical systems face enormous data demands if they are to effectively monitor SDG indicators.

Photo: Graham Crouch/World Bank

The SDGs encompass a range of sustainable development issues and identify important areas of focus, including gender equality. The 2030 Agenda aims to realize the human rights of all and empower all women and girls. While the prominent inclusion of gender equality within the SDGs is a welcome step forward, it also offers another set of measurement challenges to overcome. Many of the gender-related indicators require new or updated standards and methodologies. This paper outlines the critical role that Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems play in measuring the gender-related SDG indicators and achieving gender equality.

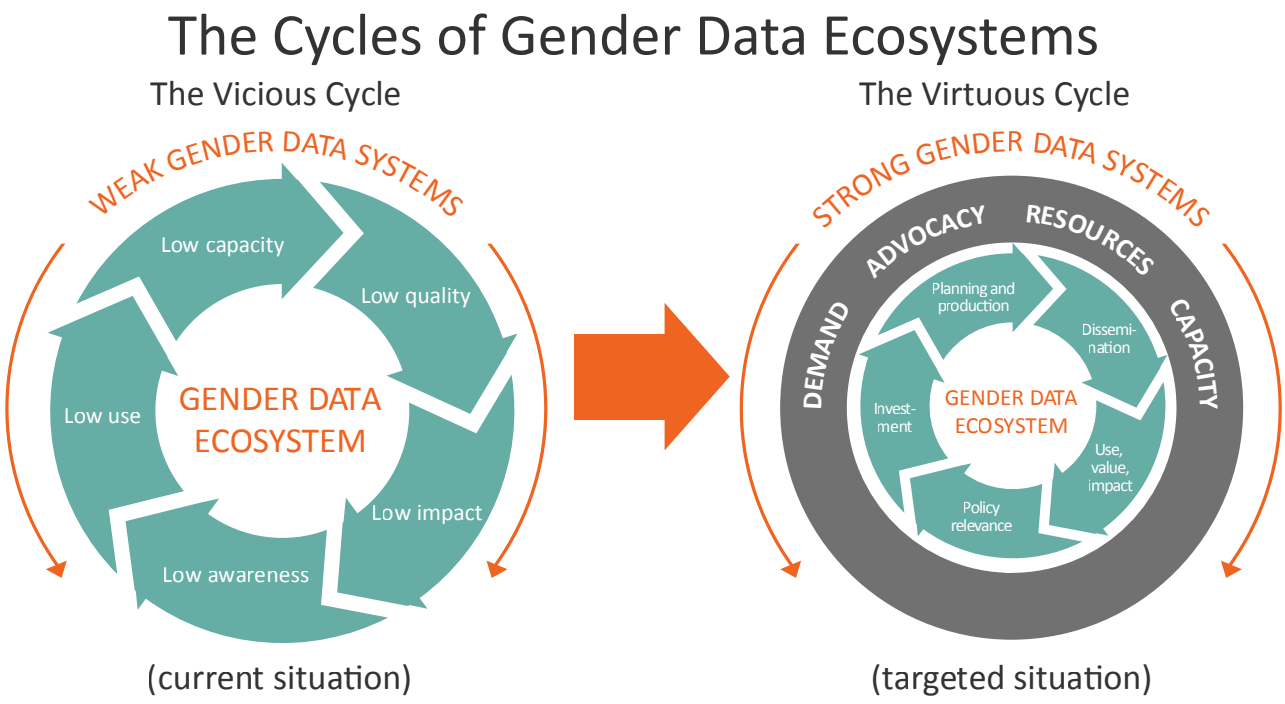
Civil Registration is defined as "the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population, as provided through decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements in each country" (UN 2001). Vital events comprise live birth, death, fetal death, marriage, divorce, annulment of marriage, judicial separation of marriage, adoption, legitimation and recognition. CRVS systems provide governments with up-to-date statistics on population size, growth and distribution. These data, alongside birth, marriage, divorce and death data, are critical tools for designing and implementing evidence-based policies needed to help achieve the SDGs (SDSN Trends and Open Data Watch 2018).

While previous studies have examined the role that CRVS plays in the SDGs, few have explored the impact CRVS plays for the gender-specific indicators and, in turn, overlooked the extent to which CRVS can improve our understanding on development progress for women and girls.

This paper describes how CRVS data is not only critical for reporting on the SDGs, but for guiding and implementing policies necessary to achieve them. Doing so is contingent on the usability, openness and interoperability of data, which CRVS systems help produce. It is this symbiotic relationship between data and gender-related SDGs that underscores how well-functioning CRVS systems are needed for the international development community to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

In order for the gender data ecosystem to effectively contribute to meeting the goals of Agenda 2030, a vicious cycle that affects it must be reversed. Figure 1 describes what leads to weak gender data systems and how specific interventions can help reverse that negative, vicious cycle. In the current situation, gender data systems suffer from low demand and use, which leads to low political support and resource allocation, which in turn leads to low capacity and ineffective systems. However, more advanced data ecosystems like macroeconomics and health prove that the cycle also turns in the opposite direction, creating a virtuous cycle where the use of data leads to increased political and financial support for data systems, which in turn makes higher quality data available. This paper outlines what must be done to reverse the vicious cycle affecting the gender data ecosystem and create systems that are strong enough to achieve the gender-related goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Figure 1: Moving from a vicious cycle of gender-data to a virtuous cycle



Source: Open Data Watch

THE ROLE OF CRVS SYSTEMS IN MEETING THE SDGs

The SDGs have not only expanded the breadth but also the depth of measuring development progress. The targets and indicators span a full spectrum of development issues and incorporate new challenges to measurement such as institutional coordination and resource mobilization. In addition to the rage of issues it tackles, the 2030 Agenda is underpinned by the ambition to Leave No One Behind. (United Nations Statistics Division 2016). From a statistical perspective, this requires a wealth of new disaggregations, or data that emphasizes the specificities of different sub-populations.

In addition to recording geographic location and sex of subjects, it is increasingly important to record insights into age, indigenous status, disability, migrant status and other characteristics relevant to country context. The challenge is to "sufficiently improve the granularity of data to satisfy this new political ambition, but in a way that prioritizes the measurement of the poorest and most vulnerable and does not divert scarce resources into generating fruitless levels of disaggregation." (MacFeely 2018). There is an urgent need to take steps to improve the quality, coverage and availability of disaggregated data to ensure that no one is left behind (United Nations Statistics Division 2016). The complexities of producing the necessary data are compounded by uneven levels of statistical capacity around the world. Many data gaps in the SDGs can be linked to a lack of timely household survey collection and weak administrative systems. According to the World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicator database, only 50% of the countries have met the recommended standard of three years or less for health-related surveys such as Demographic Health Survey; 46% have not conducted a poverty-related survey at the recommended frequency; and only 31% of countries record more than 90% of live births and deaths (World Bank 2017).

To close data gaps, international data organizations, United Nations agencies and sector experts must set methodologies and standards for indicators that are not widely available or produced while country-level actors receive a boost in capacity to produce the data relevant to the new indicators. The Agenda calls on the designated custodian agencies to provide the methodologies for data collection and, where needed, to assist countries in producing the indicators. While it is critical to explore new methods to fill gaps, it is important not to overlook how to improve existing data systems and strengthen their role in contributing to SDG monitoring and building a continuous data stream.

There has been excitement over big data and its potential for compiling official statistics and filling data for SDG indicators, but relatively little attention has been paid to the importance of existing administrative data, specifically CRVS, which are a rich source of continuous, useful data. In the context of the SDGs, survey data will not be sufficient and compilation will require the use and integration of administrative data (MacFeely 2018). A 2017 World Bank report notes that as of March 2017, 67 indicators, or 28% of all indicators covering 12 of the 17 SDGs can be measured effectively by using data derived from well-functioning CRVS systems (Mills et al 2017).

The 2030 Agenda, SDG indicators and well-functioning CRVS systems have a close and interconnected relationship. SDG target 16.9 calls for the legal identity for all, including birth

registration by 2030. Indicator 17.19.2 refers to the proportion of countries that have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years and have achieved 100 percent birth registration and 80 percent death registration. CRVS systems not only provide inputs but are goals on their own. Table 1 shows the specific SDG targets and indicators related to CRVS.

CRVS plays a critical role in monitoring and achieving, both directly and indirectly, the SDGs. While the indicators in Table 1 relate directly to improving CRVS systems, there are a handful of SDG indicators that require CRVS indirectly. For example, complete and well-functioning CRVS systems provide population level estimates, often needed for the indicators requiring per capita or per 1,000 population counts, as well as birth and mortality figures.

Table 1: SDG targets and indicators directly related to Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems

SDG Target	SDG Indicator for Monitoring Progress
16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	16.19.1 Proportion of children under 5 years whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age
17.18 By 2020... increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts	17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
17.19 By 2030... support statistical capacity building in countries	17.19.2 Proportion of countries that have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years and have achieved 100 percent birth registration and 80 percent death registration

Source: Mills, S. et al., 2017. *Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) for Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, s.l.: World Bank.

ROLE OF CRVS IN MONITORING GENDER EQUALITY IN SDGs

It is clear that the SDGs present enormous data demands across all development sectors, but the statistical complexities noted above become more nuanced as each issue is viewed on its own. This section of the paper focuses specifically on the statistical challenges associated with gender-related indicators in the SDGs and what well-functioning CRVS systems can do to help.

A well-functioning CRVS system can have disproportionately positive benefits for women and girls (**SDSN TReNDS and Open Data Watch 2018**). CRVS systems are particularly beneficial to women and girls for two reasons: first, vital statistics provide sex-disaggregated demographic data on key issues such as population distribution and maternal mortality; and second, civil registration ensures that women and girls can prove their own identities to access crucial public services such as health, education, social protection and political representation.

Photo: Dominic Chavez/World Bank

UN Women has identified a list of 54 gender-specific indicators within the SDG framework that are targeted at women and girls explicitly and call for disaggregation by sex or refer to gender equality as the underlying objective (**UN Women 2018**). The highest concentration of gender-specific indicators (14) are, not surprisingly, found in SDG5, while the remaining 40 are found among other goals. Put another way, 23% of the global indicator framework depends on gender-disaggregated data. Despite this, the complete data dedicated to understanding gender equality is not readily available.

For 13 of the 54 gender-related indicators, internationally established methodology and standards do not exist. For 29 of those indicators, methodology and data at the country level exists, but coverage is low and uneven. Only 12 of the 54 indicators are considered Tier 1, meaning international established methodology and standards are in place and they have wide coverage. Within SDG5, 5 out of the 14 indicators are infrequently collected or do not have recognized standards and definitions (**IAEG-SDGs 2018**). A recently released brief from UNICEF notes that two thirds of the SDG indicators related to young girls have limited data availability or non-existent data (**UNICEF 2016**).

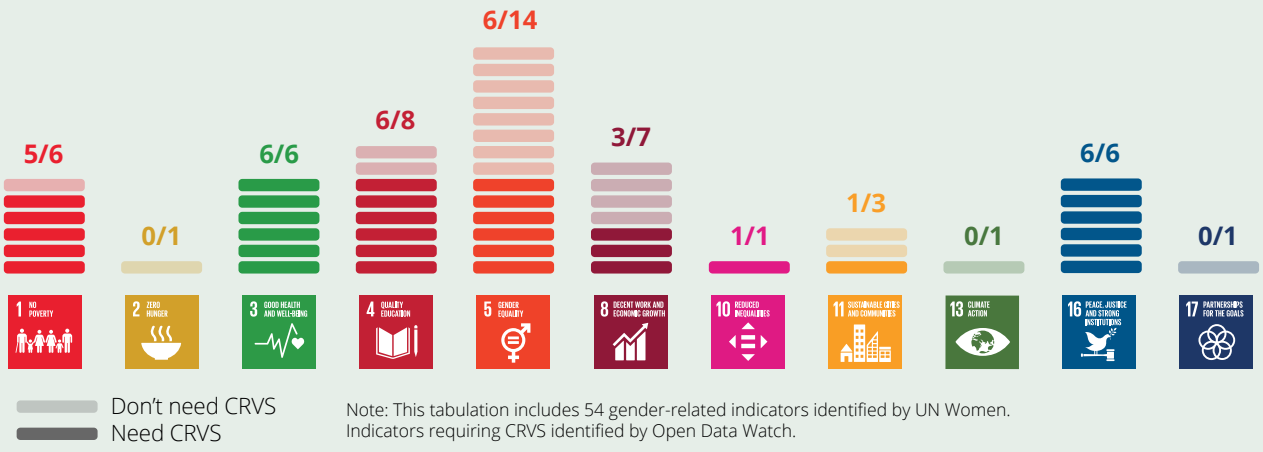
While it is a positive development to see gender-equality embedded across all the SDGs, the lack of data available to measure them risks these issues being overlooked. Fortunately, programs like the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and civil society actors like Data2X are working to identify pathways that will help fill gender data gaps (**Centre of Excellence 2018**). Improving CRVS systems is one important pathway to do just that.

According to an assessment conducted by Open Data Watch, 34 of the 54 gender-related indicators benefit from data provided by CRVS systems. While none of the indicators are directly related to the improvement of CRVS systems themselves, data produced by CRVS systems including population, cause-of-death and others serve as direct inputs for monitoring indicators related to women and girls. These include obvious indicators like maternal mortality ratios or adolescent birth rates and less expected indicators such as unemployment rate, age and persons with disabilities, which are all specified by the SDGs to be disaggregated by sex. Furthermore, 6 Tier III indicators from the list of 54 can benefit from the use of CRVS data. CRVS should be used as an important input for measuring gender equality within SDGs as the methodologies and standards are established. Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the number of gender-related indicators in SDGs that need CRVS systems and Table 2 provides a full list of the 34 indicators that require data provided by CRVS systems.

Figure 2: CRVS systems are crucial for gender-related SDGs

Excluding repeated indicators, there are 54 explicitly gender-related indicators as identified by UN Women. Of these indicators, 34 indicators benefit from CRVS data. It is clear that CRVS systems and data are crucial to monitoring progress and achieving gender equality.

Gender-related SDG indicators that need CRVS



Note: This tabulation includes 54 gender-related indicators identified by UN Women. Indicators requiring CRVS identified by Open Data Watch.

Source: Open Data Watch

Table 2: SDG gender indicators that require data provided by CRVS systems

	Indicator	Relevance to CRVS
	1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)	Denominator (population)
	1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	Denominator (population)
	1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	Denominator (population)
	1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	Denominator (population)
	1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure	Denominator (total adult population)
	3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio	Numerator (deaths by cause) & Denominator (live births)
	3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Numerator & Denominator (live births)
	3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations	Denominator (population)
	3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods	Denominator (population 15-49)
	3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	Numerator (births by cause) & Denominator (female population aged 10–19)

Table 2: SDG gender indicators that require data provided by CRVS systems *(continued)*

	Indicator	Relevance to CRVS
	3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access among the general and the most disadvantaged population)	Denominator (population)
	4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	Denominator (population)
	4.2.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex	Denominator (population <5)
	4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex	Denominator (population)
	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex	Denominator (population aged 15 and above)
	4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	Denominator (population)
	4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex	Denominator (population)
	5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	Denominator (female population 15+)
	5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	Denominator (female population 15+)

Table 2: SDG gender indicators that require data provided by CRVS systems *(continued)*

	Indicator	Relevance to CRVS
	5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18	Numerator (marriage)
	5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age	Denominator (women population 15-49)
	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	Denominator (women population 15-49)
	5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex	Denominator (population)
	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in nonagriculture employment, by sex	Denominator (employed population)
	8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Denominator (employed population)
	8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 517 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	Denominator (population aged 5-17)
	10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Denominator (population)
	11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Denominator (population)
	16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	Denominator (population)

Table 2: SDG gender indicators that require data provided by CRVS systems *(continued)*

	Indicator	Relevance to CRVS
	16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause	Denominator (population)
	16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	Denominator (population)
	16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 1829 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	Denominator (population 18-29)
	16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions	Denominator (population)
	16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group	Denominator (population)

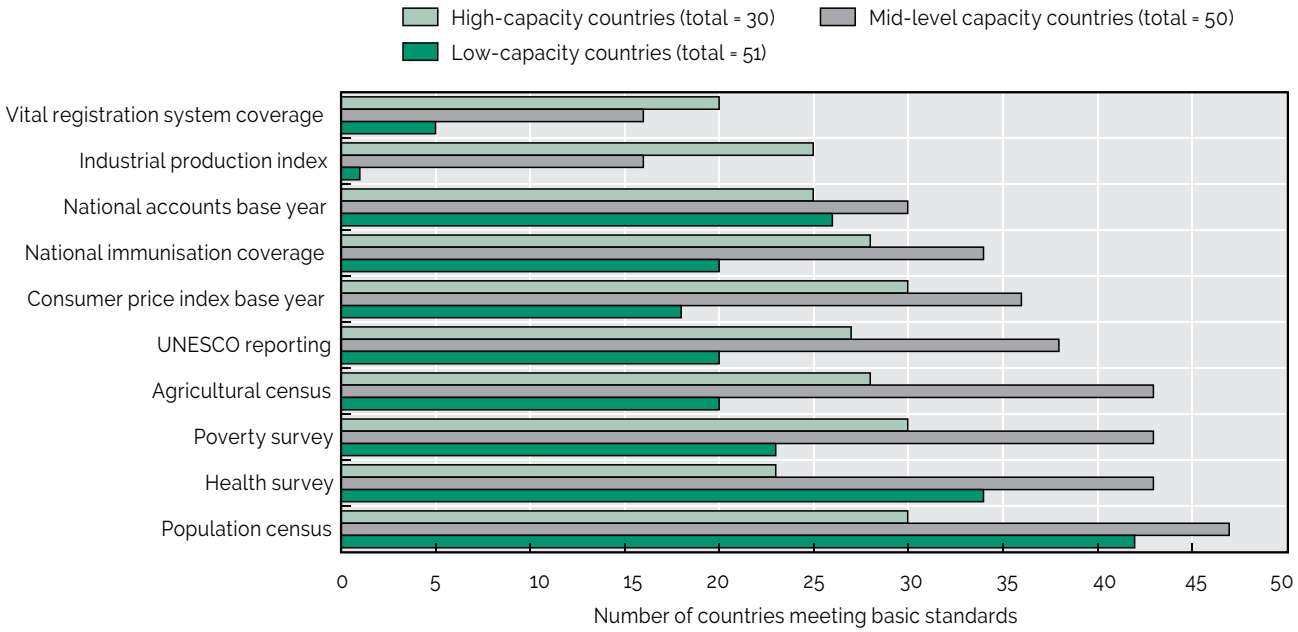
Source: Authors' own compilations

ACCELERATING PROGRESS TO ESTABLISH WELL-FUNCTIONING CRVS SYSTEMS

The SDGs present a unique opportunity to raise the profile of CRVS systems and underscore their importance to measuring and monitoring gender equality within the SDGs. While the analysis above demonstrates a significant need to harness the sex-disaggregated data produced by CRVS systems, it does not cover the current state of affairs with CRVS systems around the world and what needs to be done to put their data effectively to use. Having the data available for SDG reporting is one thing, creating demand for the systems and using the data is another. Unfortunately, many challenges still remain when it comes to the availability, usability and openness of the data. This section of the paper explores these issues.

Despite the recognized consensus of the importance and benefits of CRVS systems, there are significant gaps in the availability of vital statistics and uneven levels of country capacity. According to the World Bank, over 110 low- and middle-income countries have deficient CRVS systems (**World Bank 2018**). A comparison of capacity across social and economic statistics found the coverage of vital registration systems to be the weakest (**OECD 2017b**). As shown in Figure 3, there are fewer countries meeting CRVS systems standards compared to other statistical systems. This is not merely a function of the overall poor performance of statistical systems but also a funtion of underperformance. Certain low-income countries are able to deliver fundamental statistics in other systems such as agricultural censuses or poverty surveys but fall short in vital registration system coverage.

Figure 3: Number of countries with capacity to deliver fundamental statistics, 2016



Source: OECD , 2017b, "The role of national statistical systems in the data revolution", in *Development Co-operation Report 2017: Data for Development,* OECD Publishing, Paris

It is increasingly clear that in order to achieve the SDGs, CRVS systems must improve in many countries around the world. Fortunately, development stakeholders and national governments have shown a commitment to improving CRVS systems by making long-term investments and building infrastructure and statistical capacity in countries. South Africa and Bangladesh are strong country examples of progress through long-term investment projects. In addition, the United Nations Economic Commission to Africa and United Nations Economic and Social Commission to Asia Pacific highlight the important role of regional platforms in providing necessary political will and support to support CRVS systems. It is equally important to recognize the United Nations Statistics Division and their critical work in setting standards, offering operating principles and providing methodological guidelines for CRVS systems (**UNDESA 2014**).

This is welcome progress, but the expectations remain clear: SDG target 16.9 calls on all countries to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, with progress to be measured by the proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority. Target 17.19, which includes a commitment to support statistical capacity building in developing countries, measures progress in part by the proportion of countries that have achieved 100 percent birth registration and 80 percent death registration. According to a study by the World Bank Group and World Health Organization, significant progress is still needed to attain these SDG targets. To achieve success, the under-five birth registration must increase by 33% and death registration must rise by 77%, which is an annual average increase of over 5% through 2030 (**WBG and WHO 2014**).

The long-term approach from development stakeholder and some national governments is the right way to approach such a systemic challenge, but more can and should be done

in the short-term to provide support to country level CRVS systems. With 2030 around the corner, focusing exclusively on long-term challenges may be too much of a luxury. More must be done to sustain political will for immediate capacity building and allocating the resources needed to achieve universal registration as expected in SDG target 17.19.

Identifying demand for CRVS data

As noted earlier in the paper, low demand and use of data leads to low political support and resource allocation, creating a vicious cycle of low capacity and ineffective systems. These shortcomings, in turn, translate into low-quality data which reinforce the starting point of lack of demand (**OECD 2017**). In more advanced data sectors such as macroeconomics and health, the cycle is reversed. Demand for and use of data leads to increased political and financial support for data systems, which makes higher quality data available for use. It follows that increasing demand for and use of data derived from CRVS systems can be a transformative improvement, turning the vicious cycle affecting CRVS systems into a virtuous one. This section of the paper identifies what can be done to accelerate demand for CRVS data.

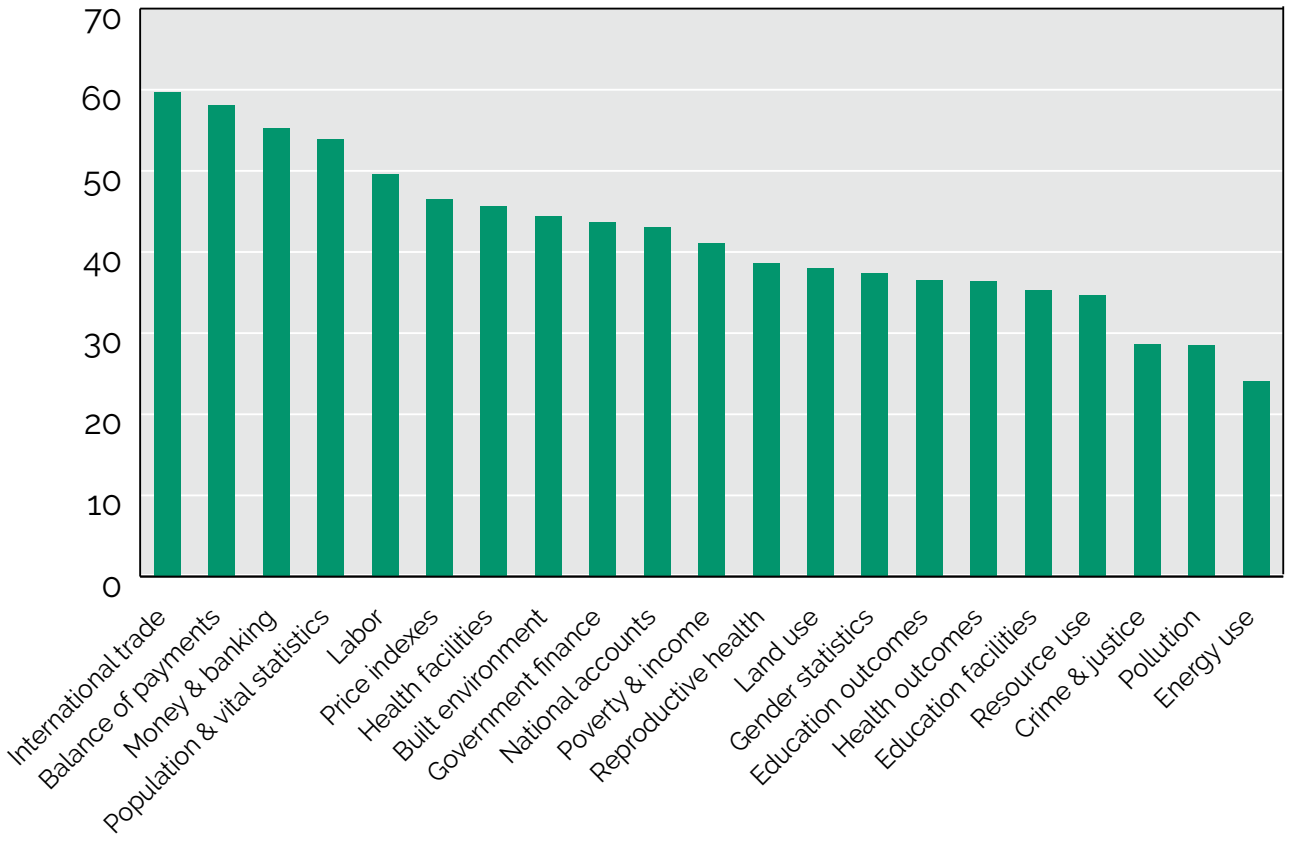
According to a recent study by AidData, Open Data Watch and PARIS21 that surveyed National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and data users in 140 low- and middle-income countries, demographic statistics were the most sought after data set after macroeconomic statistics (**Sethi and Prakash 2018**). A complementary study, *Measuring Data Use: An Analysis of Data Portal Web Traffic*, was undertaken to help NSOs and their partners better understand the benefits of web analytics tools and assist them in implementing web analytics on their websites or data portals (**Open Data Watch 2018**). Open Data Watch, in partnership with PARIS21, invited seven NSOs in low- or middle-income countries to participate in a study analyzing web traffic on their principal websites or data portals using Google Analytics to better understand the use and demand of data on their websites. According to the study, the most popular pages providing access to data were those with population or other demographic statistics and economic statistics on inflation, national accounts and employment.

The two studies demonstrate real demand for these data. The increasing demand for data to monitor the SDGs coupled with the increased political attention to gender data suggests that the demand for CRVS and gender-specific data will rise in the coming years. The next step is harnessing that demand to create more political, financial and statistical support to improve CRVS systems and to ensure that data is accessible and openly available to users.

HOW OPEN DATA DRIVES DEMAND

While specific data on CRVS data use and openness is not available, some proxy indicators can be used to better understand where countries stand on disseminating data they produce. The Open Data Inventory by Open Data Watch is a global assessment of coverage and openness of official statistics in 180 countries. According to the 2018 results seen in Figure 4, population and vital statistics was the fourth highest scoring data category. However, the population and vital statistics category alone does not tell the whole story. CRVS data are an input to several other categories such as gender statistics, health outcomes, and crime and justice that have much lower scores (**Open Data Watch 2018**). Low levels of availability suggest that national statistical offices lack the data or the resources to produce the necessary indicators. Low levels of openness show that data are not being made available in useful or usable formats. Thus CRVS-based and gender-related data are under resourced and under utilized, leading to a shortfall in the demand for CRVS data.

Figure 4: Average coverage and openness scores of official statistics in 180 countries, by category



Source: The 2018 Open Data Inventory, Open Data Watch

Across the seven social data categories, the poorest coverage and openness occur in crime and justice category with gender statistics, including violence against women and health outcomes not far behind. However, in low-income countries health outcomes and reproductive health are ranked highest, reflecting the support for data collection through Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS).

This uncovers an important reality about relying too heavily on surveys to provide data that fully functioning CRVS systems could (and should) produce. For many countries, particularly those with higher levels of mortality, administrative and centralized statistical collection capacity is weak. As a result, household surveys may serve as the principal vehicle for data collection of vital statistics and other demographic indicators. Data obtained through complete and accurate civil registration processes are not subject to sampling errors and contain relatively few response errors, which are more common in household surveys (**Mills et al 2017**). In addition to safeguarding against possible statistical errors, CRVS systems that provide reliable, continuous and up-to-date population figures offer more insights into population movements, demographic changes and health threats than less timely surveys. Accurate, complete and timely statistics for how many women live in a country, the leading causes of their death, fertility rates and life expectancy are provided by recording every life event, which is a core function of a strong CRVS system.

Figure 5: World Health Organization's rapid assessment of national civil registration and vital statistics systems

Improve production, use and dissemination of vital statistics

"The contribution of vital statistics to evidence-based decision-making is dependent upon timely dissemination to and appropriate uptake by the relevant decision-makers. Data quality, access and use are critical components of any statistical system but are often neglected. The result is that the information on births and deaths collected at great expense is not used as well as it could be, and those collecting the data are not fully rewarded for their efforts."

Guidelines for CRVS Rapid Assessment Tool

Source: World Health Organization, 2010.

The data value chain is defined by a close connection between data collection, analysis, dissemination and the impact of data on decision making (Open Data Watch and Data2X 2017). A critical link on that value chain is for NSOs to ensure that CRVS and gender-specific data are open, accessible and available in a timely manner. In fact, a prominent CRVS rapid assessment tool from the World Health Organization (Figure 5) emphasizes data dissemination and use as one of the essential steps for building an effective system. (WHO 2010).

Do countries that make CRVS data more available and open do better in terms of capacity and domestic support? Cases such as the Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA) suggest that they do. The PSA makes CRVS data and gender-specific data more easily accessible than many other countries, which has led to increased awareness of the importance of these data and services (PSA 2019). In this case, CRVS and national statistics are fully funded by the government budget, suggesting that the availability of data fulfilling a demand is closely related to the country's higher level of budgetary support from domestic resources. The PSA is an example that other countries could follow to reverse the vicious cycle of data and achieve a virtuous one.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS TO BOOST DISSEMINATION AND USE OF CRVS DATA

The SDGs present the development statistics community with an opportunity to make important changes that will help meet the demand for gender-relevant data derived from CRVS. If the 2030 Agenda is to be successful, CRVS systems must be improved to produce and disseminate the gender-specific data on which so many indicators depend. While continuing to support the long-term development of well-functioning CRVS systems, NSOs can take a number of actions in the short and medium term to boost the interest in CRVS-based data and gender data. Important moments to showcase progress, such as the presentation of Voluntary National Reviews at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum, will increase data use and demonstrate the impact of data on policies and results. Actions like this will improve political and public understanding and support for CRVS-based data and greater financial support for their

long-term development. Below are additional short- and medium-term actions to improve dissemination and use of CRVS based data with emphasis on gender data.

- **Plan for open and interoperable data dissemination:** NSOs should adhere to open data practices and data interoperability guidelines to increase data availability and data use while soliciting feedback from prominent users and building an end-user support group. The importance of this has recently been identified by the UN Statistical Commission as a priority (United Nations Social and Economic Council 2018). Countries in the process of updating National Strategy for the Development of Statistics should consider integrating CRVS-gender data improvement with a focus on data dissemination and promotion of data use into these plans.

- **Build technical capacity:** Data producers need to increase their internal staff skills and management capacity beyond data production for data analysis. Expertise and capacity should include usability and dissemination of CRVS-based data and, in particular, gender data to support use. This will make data more usable and improve data quality and interoperability.

- **Promote data use:** Many potential users are not aware of the importance of CRVS-based data. Showcasing examples of their use to support decisions in areas of gender equality, social, economic and health policy and monitoring progress towards SDG goals can help to demonstrate their importance. Promotion efforts should include ways to provide summary data tabulations, visualization of data for ease of use in policy briefs and ways to alert users of release of new data through emails and data release calendars.

- **Close the gap between production and use:** There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but with the advances in data dissemination and open data technology, countries should plan to use innovative approaches to increase use and raise the value of the data they produce. These include innovative approaches in analysis and publication of vital statistics derived from civil registration and gender specific data. NSOs can also increase use through open and interoperable data practices, measuring the use of their data, making their data websites more appealing to users and using social media to promote published data.

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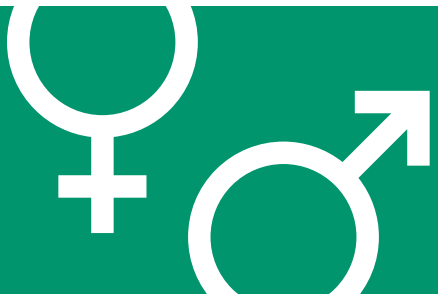

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