

Health Canada  
Human Resources Development Canada  
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Status of Women Canada

# **Gender Equality Indicators: Public Concerns and Public Policies**

Proceedings of a symposium held at  
Statistics Canada, March 26 and 27, 1998

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This document expresses the views and opinions of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official policy or opinion of the sponsoring federal departments or the Government of Canada.

## Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Gender equality indicators: public concerns and public policies: proceedings of a symposium held at Statistics Canada, March 26 and 27, 1998

Issued also in French under title : Les indicateurs de l'égalité entre les sexes, préoccupations publiques et politiques gouvernementales.

Issued also in electronic format through the Internet computer network.

Co-published by Health Canada, Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada.

ISBN 0-662-27418-0

Cat. No. SW21-36/1998E

1. Women – Canada – Economic conditions – Congresses.

2. Women – Canada – Social conditions – Congresses.

3. Economic indicators – Canada – Congresses.

I. Stone, Leroy O., 1936- .

II. Karman, Zeynep E.

III. Yaremko, W. Pamela.

IV. Canada, Status of Women Canada.

V. Canada, Health Canada.

VI. Canada, Statistics Canada.

VII. Canada, Human Resources Development Canada.

HQ1236.5C3G46 1998

305.4'0971

C98-980386-4

Published by authority of Status of Women Canada

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La version française de cette publication est disponible sur demande (n° SW21-36/1998F au catalogue).

January 1999

Catalogue no. SW21-36/1998E

ISBN 0-662-27418-0

Ottawa

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## Foreword

### Message from

#### The Honourable Hedy Fry Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)

The Gender Equality Indicators Symposium provided a precedent-setting opportunity for those working in the social indicators field to focus on gender, and share their experiences on incorporating women's realities in the measurement of social and economic well-being. The range of participants from across Canada and around the world reflected the global significance of gender equality indicators, and the degree to which interest in their development is growing on a national and international scale.

Gender equality indicators are not just about measuring the differences between women and men. They are powerful tools with which we can understand better how we live our lives, how we raise our families, how we work. Importantly, they are a critical factor in how women and men spend their time – a valuable commodity in an increasingly complex world, where the development of all of Canada's human resources is critical to our future success.

The importance of gender equality indicators as benchmarks in our progress toward equality is indeed profound. As such, they are critical to my mission as Secretary of State for Status of Women Canada. But as tools that measure the distribution of the factors that determine the quality of our lives – time, work and income – their importance to society as a whole cannot be underestimated.

From child poverty to the impact of new technologies, we are facing increasingly complex challenges on every front. It is my belief that gender equality indicators will provide us with information we need to effectively manage our changing world. Importantly, they will help us to ensure that as many Canadians as possible are participating, benefiting and contributing to our social and economic success in the 21st century.

Finally, this symposium would not have been possible without the rich and varied contributions of our partners. I wish to extend a special thanks to Statistics Canada for initiating and organizing the symposium. My department, Status of Women Canada, was pleased to co-sponsor the

event, along with Human Resources Development Canada (in particular, its Women's Bureau) and Health Canada. The symposium marks an important step in advancing the work originating in the publication, *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, a joint project undertaken by Federal, Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. I would also like to acknowledge the participation of non-governmental organizations and their contribution to the symposium's success.

## Preface

The publication in October 1997 of *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* by the Federal, Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women was the key stimulus for the symposium that gave rise to this document. Three months after that event we began to discuss ways of designing a process to examine nation-wide usage of the information contained in that document. The symposium was a part of this process.

However, if it was to be a worthwhile event, the symposium needed to define a selection of important issues that go far beyond those directly connected with examining the usage of *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*. We selected four broad themes around which to focus the workshops. These themes were as follows:

- I. Gender equality indicators and gender-based analysis
- II. Paradigms implicit in social and economic indicators
- III. “Best practices” for developing, dissemination, and using gender equality indicators (GEI)
- IV. Technical problems and data gaps confronting GEI development.

This book contains the speeches and the background papers that were designed to highlight the four themes, as well as summaries of the outcomes of discussion in the related workshops. To these communications are added the welcoming speeches by leaders of the sponsoring departments, and major addresses by leaders of two related bureaus with wide international repute – the Gender Statistics Division of Statistics Sweden, and the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations.

Leaders from government, university and non-government organizations participated actively in the workshops. They contributed to the achievement of a high level of intellectual stimulation in connection with important and complex issues. The list of participants at the end of the book demonstrates that all the major regions of Canada were represented at the symposium by leaders of these organizations.

To all of the persons cited indirectly above, and to other contributing participants, we wish to express our sincere thanks. Special thanks are due to individuals who worked hard and successfully over a period of many weeks to help create and manage the event. They include, in alphabetical order, Michael McCracken, Bonnie O'Neil-Small, Jean Randhawa and Sheila Regehr. Finally, for their work both in support of the symposium and in the design of this book, special thanks are due to Catherine Pelletier and Sharron Smith.

Leroy O. Stone  
Zeynep E. Karman  
Pamela Yaremko

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# Importance of Gender Equality Indicators to the Business of Government

Notes for an address

by

The Honourable Hedy Fry

Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)

Good morning.

It is my great pleasure to join you here today. This symposium marks an important milestone in our quest for women's equality and in our efforts to secure the well being of Canada's social and economic future.

We are meeting to acknowledge the contribution that gender equality indicators make to a growing body of knowledge about women and men, social and economic relationships, growth and human development. Importantly, we think that these indicators are responding to a need for innovation in a changing world.

As I look around the room, I see many champions of this critical work, and I want to thank you for coming; because you are the leaders who have probed beyond accepted standards to help shape a new understanding of our socio-economic reality. We have always talked about social issues and economic issues as distinct and separate structures. A lot of the work that has been done over the last few years has shown us that the distinctions between social and economic issues are arbitrary, and they are very artificial. Social and economic issues are very interdependent.

In particular, I would like to thank Statistics Canada for initiating and organizing the symposium. Many thanks as well to Human Resources Development Canada, Health Canada and my department, Status of Women Canada, for co-sponsoring the event. The support of Chief Statistician Dr. Ivan Fellegi and Dr. Leroy Stone of Statistics Canada's Analytical Studies Branch, has been pivotal in advancing the awareness and development of gender equality indicators.

I would also like to acknowledge my provincial and territorial counterparts, who have moved forward strongly and have believed in these issues from the beginning. Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers

Responsible for the Status of Women jointly initiated the *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, a significant contribution to the social indicators field. I do not know how many of you have a copy of our document, which was assisted by Statistics Canada.

The importance of gender equality indicators to the business of government and non-government organizations, and the private sector, is clear. They are benchmarks to guide us in undertaking gender-based analysis of policies and programs. A commitment to gender-based analysis has been made by countries around the world and by my government. It is outlined in the 1995 report *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: Federal Plan for Gender Equality*.

**A great deal of credit is due to the groups of women of the non-governmental organizations who have constantly told us that it was important that we have this information.**

A great deal of credit is due to the groups of women of the non-governmental organizations who have constantly told us that it was important that we have this information. They have been instrumental in raising awareness of the range of contributions that women make to society and the economy. The inclusion of questions on unpaid work in the 1996 Census for example, was due, in large part, to their unwavering belief in the need for policy-makers to have and use this information.

The progress made in the measurement of unpaid work in Canada is integral to the development of gender equality indicators. Valuing both paid and unpaid work is not only a key element of women's economic autonomy, but of the well being of the family and society as a whole. The information that we have from the census about unpaid work, under the three headings of housework, taking care of children, and taking care of seniors, is very informative. This information reflected the work that we had done over the two years in our Economic Gender Indicators.

Since the 1970s, Canada has been recognized as a leader in the measurement and valuation of unpaid work. As many of you are aware, the results of the questions on unpaid work contained in the 1996 Census were released just last week. These questions, and the realities that their answers reveal, are a critical step towards ensuring that caregiving is counted. But what are we doing to make sure that it is valued, supported and more equitably shared?

We know, for instance, that, as we see in the census, that many women have been engaged, and many men as well, but mostly women, have been engaged in dealing with the issue of unpaid work, which includes giving care for seniors and for children. If this was not being done in the unpaid work sector, somewhere along the way governments would have had to

have policies to deal with this in the public paid work sector. So we see the unpaid work has saved money for the government and has in fact contributed to the gross domestic product.

In Canada we are looking at issues such as those related to closing down of acute care beds, because we are trying to move towards appropriate home care and community care where possible. We know, however, that as women are moving into the paid work force there is a vacuum to be filled. The pressure on the need for someone to do that home care or that elder care is increasing. That pressure is due not only to funding issues but also to human resource issues, as women are leaving this area to go out into the paid work force.

If we are going to move women into the paid work force we need to be able to bridge that gap, to fill that need in society. Maternity and parental benefits are examples, as are flexible workplace policies and a range of child benefits. The most recent federal policy response was the tax credit for providers of care to elderly or disabled persons in last month's Federal Budget. As you know, the Minister of Finance created a tax credit of \$400 per year for persons who stayed at home to contribute in the unpaid work force to looking after elders or disabled persons. This is a start, an acknowledgment that one needs to recognize that work; because if you look down the road to the fact that at the end of their lives women who stay at home and do unpaid work have no pension benefits, have had no money for themselves to put into registered retirement savings plans, they have no private pension plans at all. These are the women who are solely and completely dependent upon government to support them when they are retired, and the pressure on government is still there. It is not as if because you do not recognize the unpaid work today you can get away with something later on. Government is then responsible for some sort of seniors retirement benefit, and I think you will find that you will pay more at the end of life than if you give it during life so that women can have this money set aside for their own pension benefits.

Researchers, non-government organizations and other experts have identified dependent care as the most critical and urgent unpaid work issue of public policy interest. Clearly, this government is listening and I am proud of our achievements. I am also aware that we have a long way to go.

This symposium provides a needed contribution to informed public dialogue and policy development in the interest of gender equality. We have gathered here because the time has come to go beyond the data and

**Researchers, non-government organizations and other experts have identified dependent care as the most critical and urgent unpaid work issue of public policy interest.**

discover where it can take us. Why are these indicators of value? Why do the gaps that they identify exist and which policy directions are likely to be the most effective in helping to close them, recognizing that there is no 'one size fits all' policy? And what are the wider policy implications?

**While gender equality is a critical objective in its own right, it is also a necessary condition to addressing other challenges.**

While gender equality is a critical objective in its own right, it is also a necessary condition to addressing other challenges. If women, as they do in Canada, make up 51% of our work force, I know of no private company or no corporation that would develop its human resource potential and leave 51% untouched. If in Canada, or in any country of the world where we are looking at competitiveness, and we are concerned with developing our human resources to their utmost, then we are going to have to stop ignoring the 51% of women that have in many ways been ignored or where we have not really understood why some of the barriers have existed and why there has been a differential. Thus, challenges such as the reduction of poverty, environmental sustainability, and an equitable distribution of work, employment and resources are key.

From health and social service reforms to a renewed retirement income system, from changing paid labour force conditions to tax reform – this information has significant impact on effective policy development at all levels of government, as well as in the private and volunteer sectors.

Gender equality indicators are departures from accepted standards, an integration of social and economic policy, and a balance of male and female realities. If legislation and policies are going to be truly implementable, if they are really going to make a difference to the people whose lives one is trying to affect, it must first and foremost recognize the realities of peoples' lives, and recognize that different strategies have to be employed if you are going to achieve true equality. In order that our policies remain comprehensive and they touch on those realities that we are measuring, it is imperative that we continue to follow through with timely data. Data does not remain static. We must remember, therefore, that collection of data is a work in progress.

As well, all indicators, be they social or economic, are by their nature subjective. They are products of our conscious selves, reflecting certain patterns of thought. What we think. What is important. What we value. What counts. Are we sure, then, that gender equality indicators are measuring the right things and if so, as defined by whom?

Another challenge you face at this symposium arises out of the opportunity for exchange that it provides. In learning of the exciting

initiatives taking place across the country and around the world, you will also be asking yourselves how to optimize progress by working better together.

In discovering best practices, are there significant economies of scale yet to be realized? In analyzing what has worked and what hasn't, can we improve our development, dissemination and use of these valuable tools?

While gender equality indicators can enhance the efforts of governments undertaking gender-based analysis, they can also encourage those who have not yet begun. And how can we maximize their impact still further? Can they be used by businesses, by community organizations and by women and men making personal decisions in their lives about their future and that of their family? About whether they work or they do not work?

Finally, once we articulate our goals, how can these indicators help us develop concrete objectives and measure our success in achieving them?

We must be diligent in our efforts to raise awareness in all sectors of society on the value of this information. We can also provide guidance in finding, analyzing and interpreting the data so that appropriate and effective policy responses can be developed.

**We must be diligent in our efforts to raise awareness in all sectors of society on the value of this information.**

In this respect, I am pleased to announce the release today of a publication prepared by Statistics Canada for my department, Status of Women Canada, and it is called *Finding Data on Women: A Guide to Major Sources at Statistics Canada*. It is my sincere hope that women's groups, researchers, policy analysts and decision-makers, community organizations, advocacy groups and other interested women and men will find, in this Guide, a helpful starting point for their work. This Guide is really giving you the list of the information that is present. It is really important that we get the data, we know what data exist, and we know where are the gaps, and we know how we can continue to move forward to develop new data.

Towards the end of her life, the noted French feminist Simone de Beauvoir said in her book, *All Said and Done*, "I tore myself away from the safe comfort of certainties through my love for truth; and truth rewarded me."

The full truth may always allude us, but the important work that has brought us here today has at least enhanced our perception of it. The time has come to complete the picture of our economy and our society, to recall that in that picture we must fill in the 51% that we have left out.

Indeed, I have more questions than answers, and it means that we must continue to build on what we now know. This is a work in progress as I said earlier; but as society changes, as families change, as we find that people, especially women, live longer years, we need to remember that this is going to influence how we make public policy. We must continue to push that envelope to find out the newest data. We find that in the data we have, we must remember that there is not only the difference between men and women and the realities of their lives and the barriers that they face in terms of gender; but also among women there are many diversities. There is an issue to look at in Canada of aboriginal women, of lesbian women, of disabled women, of women of colour, because of the diversity of our population. The barriers that we find will, in fact, be different as we move forward and we disaggregate that data even further. But I believe the path before us is clear; because if equality in this society is what we are looking for, if we want to give everyone the opportunity to be able to achieve whatever is their potential, then we must find that information that reflects the realities and the different barriers that people face.

Thus we must continue, all of us in this room, to increase awareness and acceptance of women's realities and their values. We can make visible what has before been hidden and unrecognized with good data. In so doing, we can build one further, vital step toward equality between women and men and amongst women, and we can secure the foundation for our future as a nation.

I am inspired by the wealth and diversity of knowledge I know is in this room. I believe that you are up to the challenge. I am certain there will be many engaging exchanges over the next two days and I look forward to learning of their outcome.

Thank you.

# Gender Equality Indicators: Tools to Improve Policy Development and Program Design

Notes for an address

by  
Mel Cappe  
Deputy Minister  
Human Resources Development Canada

I am very pleased to be here with you to discuss some of the key issues relating to gender equality, and to discuss initiatives to incorporate the analysis of indicators mentioned by the Minister into the policy and program development process. It is very important to integrate the gender equality indicators, and I would like to come back to this point in a moment.

As Deputy Minister of one of the large federal government departments, I am convinced that these measures have an impact on the overall Canadian population – and not just on women. However, it is important to realize that incorporating these indicators into policy development will change policies and programs. I have just come from a meeting where employment insurance was discussed, and I am currently preparing a “DECK” for my Deputy Minister colleagues and soon for the Ministers as well. Someone in the room mentioned that of all the graphics and charts we had, there were none explaining the difference between the unemployment rates for men and for women, or the trends in the fluctuation of these figures. I’m sorry I forgot the figures, but I am proud to work in a department where this is a key issue, and where it was therefore acceptable for someone to raise this question and change the presentation to ensure that these trends would be shown to the Ministers at the upcoming Cabinet meeting.

I would now like to talk about my department and explain to you why this issue is important at HRDC.

Every Canadian, at some stage in life, receives support from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). Our department touches the lives of more than 6.9 million Canadians each year. But at some point everybody is really touched.

HRDC's services include the National Child Benefit. In collaboration with the provinces, this initiative deals with low-income families. It provides a tax benefit to low income families, and tries to help, in collaboration with the provinces, those parents to get back into the labour force, to become self-sufficient and get over the welfare wall. This initiative touches women much more than it does men, and many lone parent men and women. Analysis has been done on several occasions to determine how the National Child Benefit has a differential effect on men and women, and the importance that that makes in our design. We also have student loans and programming for youth at risk, as well as employment and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Our program ranges through the provision of Employment Insurance benefits for the unemployed, to regulating the work place in the federally regulated sector, to labour market training and finally to pensions for seniors.

**Gender considerations permeate the entire life cycle and, consequently, must be considered when we develop policies or design programs within the department.**

As Minister Fry pointed out, the life cycle is critical in looking at the differential ways that government policies and programs affect individuals, and the differential ways they affect men and women. Gender considerations permeate the entire life cycle and, consequently, must be considered when we develop policies or design programs within the department.

As the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women pointed out in their ground-breaking report, *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*,

*“Gender equality requires appropriate treatment of both similarities and differences between women and men to achieve equal results . . . This requires equal valuation of the ways in which women and men are different as well as similar, respecting their rights and choices as full human beings and promoting a greater overall sharing of society’s costs and benefits.”*

That really does capture the importance not only of just looking at equality focussing on similarities but rather equality exploiting the differences and understanding how that affects equality or inequality.

In our work at HRDC, we acknowledge that gender equality indicators, or GEIs, give us a better understanding of the social and economic contexts of various groups in the Canadian population, and how our policies and programs interact with them.



As well, we recognize that gender-based analysis must begin at the very earliest stages of policy and program development, because mistakes made at the outset cannot easily be remedied and unintended and potentially counter-productive consequences can arise. Indeed as we work through the Canada Pension Plan amendments that were most recently passed and implemented in C2 in this current parliament, the gender implications of pension policy are quite significant. There are not many easy answers, but there are many difficult questions and challenges. Taking account of them at the outset is essential to ensure that we get the right policy conclusion.

**We recognize that gender-based analysis must begin at the very earliest stages of policy and program development.**

The social, intellectual and health development of children is another example. We are in the very early stages of defining and measuring the learning readiness of children using the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth.

For those of you unfamiliar with this project, this national survey co-sponsored by HRDC and Statistics Canada takes 25,000 children and follows them through time, providing an invaluable snapshot of the state of Canadian children. It charts their health, development, behaviour, self-image, relationships, child care, school achievement and participation in community life.

Over time, this national database will allow us to identify the factors that influence children's growth and development as they move from infancy to adulthood. It will help determine the prevalence of various biological, social and economic risk factors affecting children and youth, particularly those that impact children's readiness to learn.

Research indicates that the factors affecting learning readiness include physical well being and appropriate motor development, emotional health and a positive approach to new experiences, socialization, social skills, and other factors.

However, we are a long way from knowing the pathways that male and female children take to acquire those competencies. If there are marked differences, and if they are not adequately addressed at the earliest stages, there may be ramifications for all of our later programming geared to youth and adults.

Another example of the importance of indicators is the Index of Social Health, developed by HRDC for all of Canada. Over the past fifteen years, this measure of social well-being shows a different trend from economic well-being as measured by the GDP. But do men and women experience social well-being in the same way? The answer is no.

When we are confident of a measure of social well-being, it will be important to identify the different ways in which men and women contribute to the indicators that make up such a measure. In light of realities such as the fact that boys are much more likely than girls to successfully commit suicide while depression is more prevalent among teenaged girls, are examples of things we have to consider to make the distinction and understand the difference between men's social health and women's social health.

**Further work on measures of well-being should examine the experience of social well-being from the point of view of both male and female life experience.**

Further work on measures of well-being should examine the experience of social well-being from the point of view of both male and female life experience. Incorporating gender considerations into the index may shed new light on this important issue. In fact, indicators can prompt us to consider if we are even asking the right questions.

Measures such as the GEIs are also useful in determining the outcomes of program interventions. At HRDC, we are increasingly interested in evaluating outcomes in the broadest sense – the effect of the interventions on the quality of life. This is necessarily causing us to assess the way we collect program data and perform evaluations. I hope that your discussions at this conference will help us to ask the right questions.

Clearly, there are nuances to gender issues which require greater examination before we can develop appropriate policies and responsive programs. And that's the real value of economic gender equality indicators.

They allow us to identify gender trends that we may have previously missed or dealt with incorrectly by perpetuating gender stereotypes. Not only does this help us better target our initiatives, it also enables us to conduct more in-depth studies in areas requiring further attention.

The GEI's are an essential part of gender-based analysis which remind us to question whether both men's and women's experiences have been considered in identifying the issues, and how the outcomes of a given policy may be different for girls and boys, or women and men.

This analysis compels us to ask and re-ask certain questions. How is diversity taken into account? Do the options we are considering perhaps inadvertently run the risk of favouring or penalizing a given group? How do we achieve a better balance? We have to look at these questions and try to find answers.

Gender-based indicators and gender-based analysis make good public policy. They provide invaluable new tools to policy makers and program designers as we strive to uphold our constitutional obligation of ensuring fairness and equality for all Canadians. In keeping with this approach, HRDC has produced a backgrounder and guide to GBA which draws upon the groundbreaking work of Status of Women Canada and the work of provincial governments. I am hoping these documents will assist HRDC officials, but also officials in other departments, to do sounder and more comprehensive assessments of the impacts of their policies and programs.

**Gender-based indicators and gender-based analysis make good public policy.**

The integrative approach I have outlined is, of course, just one of many perspectives on the issue. Representatives from international agencies, the provinces, municipalities and women's organizations will each bring forward different experiences and expertise for consideration over the next two days.

This diversity of viewpoints is invaluable. Not only does it ensure inclusiveness. It also expands our knowledge base about the best ways to utilize gender equality indicators as we address the dynamics of gender differences at the front-end of policy and program development. If I have a regret about this conference, it is that there aren't more men participating. I congratulate the men who are participating; because I think it is important that the diversity of views informs this kind of discussion and inform the debate.

I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this, and I wish you a very successful conference on what is obviously a very stimulating subject.

# Contributions of Statistics Canada to Gender Sensitive Data and Analyses

Notes for an address

by  
Ivan Fellegi  
Chief Statistician  
Statistics Canada

I welcome you all to Statistics Canada, particularly those of you who have come from other countries and others who may be visiting us for the first time. I am impressed and somewhat overwhelmed by the presence here of so many outstanding experts in a variety of domains related to gender equity. This creates a potential for discussions that will be profound and influential, and Statistics Canada is honoured to be the venue for your workshops.

Once again, the profile of social policies is rising among the concerns of Canadian governments. The aftermath of the prosperity of the 1980s, the recession of the early 1990s, long stagnant personal incomes, persistent unemployment, and the recent battles with the deficit have left us facing some fundamental questions about social cohesion and the distribution of opportunities to build self-reliance in Canadian society.

Not the least among these issues is the quest to achieve better gender balance across a variety of spheres of life. What is at stake here is not just equity, but, as has been clearly demonstrated by research, also economic development and the well-being of children.

And we have an additional complication. Cut-backs to the formal health care system are increasing the family's share in the burdens of caring for the sick; and that share falls disproportionately on the shoulders of women.

Hence it is important that gender balance be studied across a wide spectrum of the work that needs to be done in our society. A necessary condition for carrying on this kind of study effectively is a degree of leadership by the national statistical agency. Such leadership is obviously needed for the development of the necessary data bases, but it does not stop there. It encompasses analytic work leading to better insights which,

**It is important that gender balance be studied across a wide spectrum of the work that needs to be done in our society.**

**There are difficult conceptual issues which have to be addressed (e.g., the valuation of unpaid work), and further leadership is required to communicate to the public analytically valid insights.**

in turn, play a critical role in securing financial and moral support for the development of the needed data bases. In addition, there are difficult conceptual issues which have to be addressed (e.g., the valuation of unpaid work), and further leadership is required to communicate to the public analytically valid insights. When I look back on Canada's performance against these needs, we can all take some pride, I believe.

And I will go through some of the milestones just to illustrate some of the richness of the material that is released in the book today. But what I really want to emphasize, and this is what adds true strength and hope for further progress in the future, is the partnership which resulted in those accomplishments. There has been an exceptionally strong partnership between Status of Women Canada, Human Resource Development Canada, Health Canada, Statistics Canada, as leaders in the field who, in particular domains, have been strongly supported by Justice, Solicitor General, Heritage Canada, Provincial counterpart agencies and ministries, and still others.

- In the early 1970s, we were among the first countries to tackle the problem of attributing monetary values to different forms of unpaid work. Indeed some of the basic concepts now internationally accepted in this work, such as the third party criterion for identifying work of economic value, are derived from conceptual innovations made at Statistics Canada in the 1970s.
- In 1978 we published our first estimates of the value of household work in Canada.
- In 1981 we began to experiment with time use questionnaires in a survey of the populations of selected metropolitan areas.
- In 1986 we did our first national time use survey.
- In 1992 we did our second national time use survey, and did our third update of estimates of the value of household work in Canada.
- In April 1993 we co-sponsored, with Status of Women Canada, an international conference on the measurement and valuation of unpaid work.
- In 1993, with strong support from HRDC, we launched the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID). SLID is a longitudinal survey. The same sample of persons is being followed for several years. This will allow analysts to track changes in their family composition, labour market activities, earnings and family income over time. With SLID, analysts can enter a new dimension of gender-

sensitive inquiry involving interactions between the family and the labour market. For example, they can begin to answer such questions as how earnings and career advancement are affected by spells of leave related to caring for children or the elderly.

- Mel already spoke about my favourite survey: The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth.
- In 1993, with strong support from Health Canada, we carried out the ground-breaking national survey on Violence Against Women and we are continuing to work with federal and provincial departments of justice to develop reliable measures of all forms of family violence as part of the Government's Family Violence Initiative.
- In 1994 we completed the design of the Total Work Accounts System (TWAS). TWAS provides a foundation for studying a wide variety of issues where both paid and unpaid work need to be considered. TWAS marries concepts and data structures in such a way that a carefully constructed set of macro-level concepts is superimposed upon a base of microdata files. That base allows us to conduct simulations of the impact of alternative policy scenarios.
- In 1995 we published a historical series, going back to 1961, of valuations of different kinds of unpaid work. We estimated that, in 1992, the aggregate value of unpaid work was equivalent to one-third to one-half of GDP in 1992 (depending on the method of valuation).
- In 1996 the Census asked Canadians to report upon their time spent doing child care, elder care and household maintenance and the first results based on these data were released last week.
- In 1998 we are doing our third national time use survey.

In addition to these specific events, we have carried out other programs and also published many results of gender-sensitive analyses that are highly relevant to deliberations concerning gender issues. The publications which take into account these results are conceived in a way to render the data and objective analyses in an accessible form to the public. This work includes compendia such as *Women in Canada*, and many articles in *Canadian Social Trends*, *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, and *Education Quarterly*. The information published in these works has, in all cases, been widely recaptured by the media.

The importance of these steps for the concerns that you will be discussing today and tomorrow can scarcely be overstated. In a nutshell, there is no practical possibility of organizing institutional initiatives concerning gender balance without documentation of women's overwhelming presence in vital aspects of paid as well as unpaid work.

If together we had not taken the steps that I have outlined, we would today be in the dark ages for any effort to get serious public and institutional attention to the issues that you will be deliberating today and tomorrow. I take note, with pleasure, of the fact that the book recently released by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers and entitled *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* contains a large block of information drawn from our Total Work Accounts System which, in turn, draws on many of the surveys and data bases developed by Statistics Canada.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels because, as I mentioned at the beginning, there are new and continuing challenges that still have to be faced. We are determined to stay alert to the further improvements that will be needed in order to continue to play our part in illuminating the issues and tracking the effectiveness of policies. This will require continuing research and analysis to identify the main forces at work, an on-going adaptation of statistical programs, the initiation of new programs of both data collection and analysis. We are ready to pledge our commitment to continue to broaden and deepen our understanding in this area and to communicate our findings objectively and accessibly to the public.

I wish you all some stimulating and fruitful discussions. And, most important, I look forward to the lessons that will undoubtedly emerge from the debates in your workshops.

# Gender Equality Indicators and Gender-Based Analysis

Notes for an address

by

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How can available gender equality indicators be used to stimulate more effective use of the principles of gender-based analysis in public policy-making?

I want to begin by characterizing what I think these indexes are telling us in the broadest terms. I think they are telling us two big stories. Please take a look at the first overhead.

## **Figure 1: How Can Available Gender Equality Indicators be Used to Stimulate More Effective Use of the Principles of Gender-Based Analysis in Public Policy-Making?**

Two big stories emerge from gender equality indexes:

- Women continue to perform multiple roles in the economy; tremendous variety across women is the way they combine paid and unpaid work; women's role is complex, characterized by diversity.
- Women continue to do the majority of unpaid work in the economy. Results in considerable economic insecurity for many women.

The first big story that I see is that, while there have been dramatic changes over the last 50 or so years in the role of women in the family and in the workplace, women as a group still behave differently from men as a group, and fulfill different roles and functions in society and in the



economy. I believe this is one reason why it is useful to have indexes that capture things like unpaid work, indexes of working time, etc. In particular, we see that women pursue a greater variety of combinations of paid and unpaid work. There is both greater variety among women and greater variety over the life cycle of individual women.

The first big story therefore is complexity. The society and labour market have become more complex because they have become more diverse.

The second big message to come out of these numbers is that women still do the majority of non-market or unpaid work.

**While women have become more diverse in their work patterns, they still do a great deal of economically important unpaid work.**

I think we are all increasingly aware of the extent to which building a strong vibrant knowledge based economy requires a strong, healthy society as a foundation. The quality of our community and family life shapes our economic potential and success through avenues such as value formation, such as honesty, work ethics, cooperative norms of behaviour, through the raising of healthy children who are able to learn, through community institutions such as schools, clubs and other organizations that develop social norms and generate cohesive communities that can produce successful individuals. These numbers tell us that women still do the majority of this important socializing work, work that is vital to the prosperity of the economy. At the same time, women contribute in the workplace to an ever-increasing degree. As a corollary of this observation that women do a great deal of unpaid work, we can infer that many women have an economic security deficit.

There are undoubtedly many issues raised for policy makers by these two big stories. I want to raise three points, each of which I will illustrate with an example from the area that I work in, which is labour market policy. Please see Figure 2.

The first point I wish to make in relation to policy is that this increased complexity means that we have to become more sophisticated in our analysis and think through what diversity means for how we interpret certain outcome measures.

**Increased diversity and social complexity means that we need more sophisticated policy analysis and that we pay careful attention to policy tradeoffs across different groups.**

The second point is that this increased complexity also means that in a number of areas we want to carefully think through policies to ensure that they are serving the full range of diverse types that are out there. In particular, when it comes to women, we need policies that support different family and work combinations, both by making opportunities for different combinations of work and family, and ensuring that there is enough economic security associated with these choices that they are viable.

**Figure 2: Three Policy Issues Raised by These Indexes**

- Increased diversity and complexity means that we have to develop more sophisticated policy analysis tools, and take greater care in interpreting outcome indicators.
- Increased diversity means we have to take greater care to ensure that policies are serving different groups. In the case of women, this means paying attention to the variety of choices and the particular forms of economic insecurity that women face.
- Increased diversity means that sometimes a policy that works well for one group will be ineffective or harmful to another group. We need to be conscious of these trade-offs in order to develop sharper policy instruments.

The third point of importance for policy is that when you have different groups in society and in the labour market that perform different functions, behave in different ways and therefore have different needs, policies that are effective for one group will often be ineffective or even harmful to other groups. It is hard for me to understand how policy analysis could not be improved by confronting these trade-offs explicitly, which requires doing group-specific policy analysis; in this case what we would call gender-based analysis. One can think of this as providing the basis for designing sharp policy instruments in areas where they may be rather blunt.

My three examples can be seen on Figure 3, and provide illustrative examples from labour market policy.

Let me try to explain what I mean by my first point, by considering a general area of policy that has very recently had renewed attention in the media. I am referring to the coverage last week of the latest census numbers on the growth of part-time work.

Part-time work generally gets a negative spin in the media and, judging from some of the recent changes to EI, it gets short shrift in some areas of policy as well.

One number that is often thrown out is the figure on involuntary part-time work, which according to the 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements is about 30% of all part-time workers. This is the figure that I want to talk about. Not going into a general discussion of the merits or demerits of part-time work. Just want to get into how we interpret indicators such as this one.

**Media and policy analysts frequently suggest that the growth of part-time work is undesirable.**

### Figure 3: Illustrative Examples from Labour Market Policy

#### Example 1

- Illustrates the idea that increased labour market diversity has important implications for how we interpret outcome indicators.
- Understanding the meaning of involuntary part-time work.
- We should take care in how we interpret measures of involuntary part-time work:
  - Greater diversity in the market in terms of hours of work schedules means greater “mismatch” at any point in time.
  - Because the labour market is very dynamic, many people will report that they are “involuntarily” part time because their preferences have changed and they are engaged in search. There will be “frictional” involuntary part-time employment.
  - Neither of these forms of involuntary part-time employment calls for policy intervention to discourage part-time job creation.

**Part-time work provides an example where a greater understanding of diversity can yield better policy analysis.**

If we take this number at face value, it does indeed appear that there is some kind of a problem in the economy, that the labour market is producing too many part-time jobs. This perceived problem might lead us to decide that we should develop policies to discourage the further creation of part-time work. For example, I have heard people saying that the problem is globalization.

It may indeed be true that the economy is producing too much part-time work, but I don't think we can simply know this from the 30% number. To see why, we have to think carefully about the diversity of the labour market.

First of all, we know that there are more women working now and that a considerable share of them **want** part-time work, in response to which firms have created an increasing number of part-time job opportunities.

So the market itself has become more diverse in terms of hours of work, in response to the more diverse preferences of labour force participants.

Suppose there were just the right number of part-time and full-time jobs (e.g., 15% of workers wanted part-time work, 15% of jobs were part time), i.e. they matched the share of preferences exactly. In a static labour market where nothing ever changed, there would be no involuntary part-time work. But the labour market isn't static. People are constantly entering and leaving the labour force, moving from school to work, to family and back again. The research has shown that women use part-time work during periods of transition between full-time work and out of the labour force, because they want to. Think about a woman who has been working part time while her children were young, who decides as they get older that she wants full-time work. During the time that it takes her to find a full-time job, she is an involuntary part-time worker. Think about a young man who has been supporting his studies with a part-time job, but now has completed his studies and is making the transition to the full-time labour force. He is an involuntary part-time worker.

**Much of the growth in part-time work reflects peoples' desire to work part time.**

The fact that they are involuntary part-time workers does not mean that there is too much part-time work. It merely means that job search takes time and that there are frictions in the labour market. We know that there are more transitions in and out of part-time work than out of full-time work, so we might expect that there are a lot of people at any point in time that are engaged in a search process, from a part-time job. In an economy with more part-time work, more people will accept part-time jobs while looking for full-time work, rather than searching while unemployed. Again, this does not mean that there is too much part-time work; it just means that in a labour market with more diversity there will be more mismatch at a point in time.

**Involuntary part-time work is a natural feature of a dynamic, diverse labour market.**

These ideas are all familiar to us in the unemployment literature. We know that there is such a thing as a natural unemployment rate associated with search and labour market frictions. Thinking about the role that part-time work plays in women's lives and thinking about the implications of labour market diversity arising from the diversity of people's preferences leads us to think about the "natural rate of involuntary part-time work". I don't know what the natural rate is, nor at the moment do I know how to go about measuring it. It would increase with the share of part-time work in the economy. And it would increase with increasing post-secondary enrollments. It means that we should be careful before we start thinking that we should be discouraging part-time job creation.

There are ways to begin getting at a more useful measure. One way would be to break the measure of involuntary part-time work into incidence and duration. If duration is increasing, it may mean that there is a greater

problem. Fortunately, the nice longitudinal data sets that Statistics Canada is now producing allow us to get at exactly this kind of labour market dynamics.

**Instead of discouraging part-time work, policy should be directed towards increasing the economic security of part-time workers.**

This is really an important issue in a gender context because of the importance of part-time work in supporting the varied choices and multiple roles performed by women in the economy.

Instead, I think we should be focused on ensuring that part-time work provides greater economic security to women wearing multiple hats. Recent changes to EI that reduce program generosity to many part-time workers and may discourage part-time job creation are unfortunate.

Example 2 (Figure 4) illustrates the point that sometimes we can make simple changes to existing policies that increase their effectiveness to women.

Here, I will discuss advance notice, and severance laws. The information is shown on Figure 4. In British Columbia we only have the former.

#### **Figure 4: Advance Notice, Severance Laws**

**Advance notice and severance laws are effective and efficient forms of labour market regulation.**

##### Example 2

- Illustrates the idea that we can sometimes design policy in a way to make it more effective for women, without making it less effective for men.
- Individual notice entitlement depends on tenure.
- Group notice entitlement depends on size of lay-off, and therefore on firm size.
- Men and women may be distributed differently across firms of different sizes.
- Men and women may have different amounts of tenure on average when laid-off.
- Attention should be paid to the patterns of men AND women when notice schedules are designed.

Advance notice is good. If laws are designed carefully, it helps workers find jobs sooner. These are really useful laws, as they don't cost the government much, and are probably an efficient form of regulation.

Individual notice depends on tenure. Group notice in cases of plant closure depends on firm size.

Figure 5 shows the notice schedules for the province from 1990. These schedules vary quite a bit across provinces.

The distribution of women and men across firms of different sizes may differ, as may average tenure at time of layoff. This will probably vary across provinces.

Because men and women's work patterns are so different, labour market policy will not be gender neutral, and changes in labour market programs and legislation will not affect men and women in the same way on average.

**The different patterns of men's and women's employment should be taken into account when designing labour standards laws like advance notice requirements.**

**Figure 5: Notice Schedule, British Columbia, 1990**

Tenure	Notice entitlement
<6 months	0 weeks
6 months to 3 years	2 weeks
3 years	3 weeks
4 years	4 weeks
5 years	5 weeks
6 years	6 weeks
7 years	7 weeks
8 or more years	8 weeks

Example 3 (Figure 6) illustrates the point that gender-based analysis may lead us in the direction of identifying trade-offs between different groups of workers that are inherent in policies.

### Figure 6: Minimum Wage Policy

**Workers who stay in the minimum wage market longer are more likely to benefit from a higher minimum wage.**

#### Example 3

Illustrates the way that gender-based analysis can help us identify winners and losers by group. Can assist us in developing sharper policy instruments.

Minimum wage increase:

- May increase probability that a worker is laid off.
- May increase the duration of unemployment spells.
- Will increase wages of minimum wage workers.

Effect on income of a minimum wage worker:

- Falls because of more time spent unemployed.
- Rises because of higher earnings when working.

Net effect increases earnings if second effect is bigger than first effect.

Probability that this is true is greater the longer the amount of time a worker spends in the minimum wage labour market.

Possible that minimum wage increase could help adult women, hurt teenagers.

**Higher minimum wages increase the amount of time low-wage workers are unemployed, but increases earnings during periods of employment.**

- Increases in the minimum wage. Old story is it may reduce employment opportunities, while raising wages for those who remain employed.
- Obvious way in which minimum wage policy might not be gender neutral is if women fill a disproportionate share of jobs. Well over 60% of minimum wage workers are women, about half are part time.
- Less obvious way in which minimum wage increases might not be gender neutral, that goes back to this old trade-off.

It's not really the case that some people gain because they keep their jobs, while others lose because they lose their jobs, when the minimum wage increases.

Instead, everyone in the minimum wage market may experience less employment, but at a higher wage. Less employment because more likely to be laid off, less likely to be rehired. Increases both the incidence and duration of unemployment spells. Note that this is a theory. Working on a project that is putting together empirical evidence on this topic. The first stage shows that incidence of a layoff does increase. It is not known yet what happens to the duration of unemployment.

The gain or loss for a particular worker arising from an increase in the minimum wage consists of two parts – the lost earnings if spending more time unemployed, and the increased earnings from the higher wage when employed.

The probability that a worker will benefit from an increase in the minimum wage is greater if she will be in the minimum wage market for a long time. This worker will then reap the benefit for longer, more likely to offset the short-term cost of more unemployment.

If it is true that women stay in the minimum wage market longer than men on average do, then women are more likely than men to benefit from increases in the minimum wage. For example, most men in the minimum wage market are teenagers who move relatively quickly up the job scale.

Here, we see that understanding the differences in labour market behaviour of men and women tells us something about whom the winners and losers are likely to be from such a policy. This will allow us to think more carefully about whether or not this policy is likely to succeed in achieving its goals. We might decide that adult women were the targets of the policy, rather than teenagers, and we might decide that it is more successful than would appear in a non-gendered analysis.

I have not documented all this so don't go quoting me to your friends. I merely mean to illustrate the ways in which we have to think carefully about how differences in the labour market patterns of men and women interact with policies to produce non-gender neutral results of policy changes. I think we need gender-specific analysis of the impact of policy on the labour market.

**If women remain in the minimum wage market far longer than men, minimum wage policy may have a gender-specific impact.**

**If policy has different effects on men and women, gender-based analysis is critical.**





# Key Concepts in the Identification of Best Practices for Development and Use of Indicators of Gender Equality

Notes for an address

by

Margaret K. Dechman

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The views expressed are those of the presenter and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Province of Nova Scotia or the sponsors of the Symposium.

I am going to talk about the practical application of gender equality indicators within the government context. The points I will cover have been developed from interviews with Status of Women officials from across Canada. I would be happy for them to take credit for their valuable contributions. On the other hand, they can also feel free to “shoot the messenger” with respect to points where they disagree with my presentation.

My presentation will address three questions. The first two questions really set the stage for the final question discussing the steps to best practices. I will begin by talking about what we consider best practices to be and how best practices in government differ from best practices in the private sector. Next, I will briefly describe the type of restructuring that is occurring in government as a context in which gender equality indicators can be used. The remainder of the presentation will focus on the creative balancing that is needed to successfully design and use gender equality indicators.

## Figure 1: What Do “Best Practices” Mean in the Government Context?

- Where do gender equality indicators fit within government restructuring?
- What balances are necessary to promote the successful use of gender equality indicators?

**By their very nature, best practices are context specific.**

One point, on which I think we would all agree, is that there is no one correct linear path for integrating Gender Analysis into government policies and programs. Best practices are, by their very nature, context specific. What works in one jurisdiction may not work in another jurisdiction. What works at one point in time may not work at another point in time. In many cases, best practices depend more on people feeling ownership of the ideas and methods than on technical steps or considerations. What we need is the enthusiasm that can only be developed by having people feeling ownership for their direction – making things work for them in their own way. Thus, rather than describing activities in specific jurisdictions, I will talk more generally about what we consider to be some useful building blocks that may assist with the development and use of gender equality indicators.

The reason there is not one path to success in the development and use of gender equality indicators is because this, like other policy related work, is really a balancing act. Rather than suggesting any prescribed “best practices” with respect to gender equality indicators, I am going to talk about the competing considerations that come into play throughout the process of developing and using indicators and suggest some ways of seeking balance.

One criticism directed toward government attempts at restructuring and performance measurement is that they borrow too heavily from the private sector. Private sector notions of “best practices” are closely linked to capturing new markets, cost effectiveness, gaining competitive advantage and, in the final analysis, increasing profitability. Is this what we expect from government? While our relationship to business is that of consumer, our relationship to government is primarily one of citizen. We expect government to be working in our best interests. Private businesses are free to exploit whatever markets are most viable. Governments must work in ways that reflect the many diverse needs of diverse citizens. This concept of government responsiveness to public interests underlies much of the discussion about the development and use of gender equality indicators in government.

**Governments must work in ways that reflect the many diverse needs of diverse citizens.**

**Figure 2: Best Practices are Context Specific**

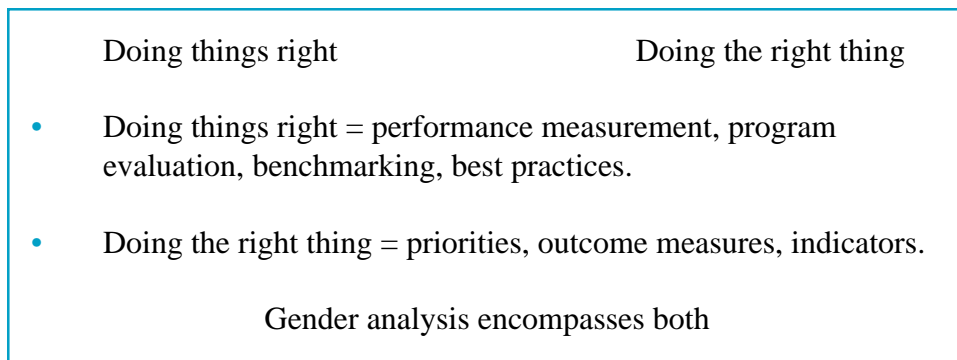
- “Best practices” in government.
- “Best practices” in private industry.

There is a lot of talk about government restructuring not only across Canada but also in many other countries across the world. This includes discussions of accountability, fiscal responsibility, benchmarking, efficiency and effectiveness. The changes that are occurring in government require the careful balancing of two distinct components – “doing things right” and “doing the right thing”. The “doing things right” side of the equation is closely tied to fiscal restraint and includes performance measurement, program evaluation, and best practices. Is government providing services that work in a cost effective manner? The “doing the right thing” perspective is quite different. We can provide the most efficient services and programs but if they are not directed toward what we really want as citizens, all is for nought. This concern is reflected through government efforts surrounding the articulation of priorities, outcome measures, and indicators. We are looking, not so much at what we are doing or how we are doing it, but where we are going.

**Changes occurring in government require a balance between “doing things right” and “doing the right thing”.**

Comprehensive gender analysis includes both sides of this balance. We are interested in monitoring and evaluating government programs and services to determine their impacts on women. At the same time, we need higher level gender equality indicators to represent high level social goals toward which we wish to progress.

**Figure 3: Balancing “Doing Things Right” and “Doing the Right Thing”**



If we take as our starting point that gender equality indicators are to depict the goals toward which we want to progress, it necessarily follows that the development of useful indicators depends on broad-based involvement of relevant stakeholders.

**The development of useful indicators depends on broad-based involvement of relevant stakeholders.**

One of the most consistent messages we heard from Status of Women officials across the country is that success in the progress of women's issues depends on the combined strengths of people working both inside and outside government. People from various government departments,

women's groups, universities, and the public all need to work together to make things happen. The positive changes that have taken place at both federal and provincial levels have come from a multi-faceted approach with both governmental and non-governmental people striving toward the same end.

Along this same train of thought, some Status of Women officials talked about the fact that real progress depends not only on public policies but also on private behaviours. The very act of providing statistics can turn what may have been viewed as a private concern into a social issue. For example, the provision of statistics on family violence has the potential to help women recognize that this is not just their personal problem and not their fault. Because of their unifying nature, carefully constructed gender equality indicators that speak to the realities of people's lives can serve as goals toward which we can all progress in both our public and private lives.

These lofty expectations for gender equality indicators obviously depend on developing measures that really reflect women's interests. One of the most important balances involves developing measures that can unify support and action but at the same time incorporate the diversity of women's perspectives. If gender equality indicators are to reflect the goals toward which the women of this country want to progress, they must include the diverse input of many different perspectives. One of the first obstacles to gaining comprehensive input in the construction of gender equality indicators is that people often feel left out if they do not have a statistical background. To avoid this problem, we must have thorough discussions of women's visions that are quite apart from concerns about how one would measure these concepts.

A second challenge relates to building consensus. If the indicators are to represent the interests of the women of Canada, they must incorporate many different perspectives. However, if the indicators are to be a unifying force, there must be some agreement on where we are going. The balance to be struck relates to encouraging and fostering diverse input while at the same time working toward measures that will serve to bring women together, not drive them apart. In the final analysis, this process of consensus building is based on building trust, respect, and commitment. Status of Women officials talked a lot about these intangible components of the process that actually make it work.

One of the forces that sometimes undermines our ability to elicit the full diversity of perspectives is the operation of power dynamics between groups or individuals. While it is clear that indicator development and use depends on the combined contributions of policy analysts, statisticians,

academics, women's groups, and all women; balanced input is not necessarily to be gained by bringing them all together. One interesting method of supporting the input of diverse perspectives, while moving toward consensus, involves a multi-step approach whereby people are consulted about their opinions individually or in small homogenous groups. Having collected diverse opinions in this manner, results are then distributed to all participants. Those holding different perspectives can gain insight into the positions of other participants without becoming defensive. This more dispassionate approach can have real success in helping diverse groups identify common interests and creative approaches. Often, by the time one reaches a second or third consultation with the participants, perspectives have come closer together and have, in fact, built on each other.

One of the points of contention most frequently mentioned by Status of Women officials was the question of what we really consider to be progress for women. Are we looking for parity with men or are we looking for an improvement in the quality of life of women? Some would argue, these do not always go hand in hand. I believe both of these perspectives are valid. The question is how and when to use one approach as opposed to the other. (See “Integrating Indicators into Analytical Framework” in the background paper on “Using Gender Equality Indicators: Steps to Best Practices” for more detail on this issue.)

While we need measures of gender parity in areas such as economic security, we also need to be careful that women's realities do not become distorted by a constant use of men's realities as the benchmark against which women's lives are assessed. The whole area of unpaid work has been developed specifically to address the enormous contributions women make that are not sufficiently valued because they fall outside of the economic model of paid work. Unfortunately, media coverage of the statistics on unpaid work often distort this objective by presenting discussions not of women's contributions but instead of comparisons between women and men. We read things like: women are still doing more housework than men, but men are doing more than they used to, and men are still doing the yard work. Is this the point we really wanted to get across by measuring unpaid work? Lets look at the presentation of this information in a different way that speaks to women's realities quite apart from any discussion of men.

I want to make clear that the numbers I am using are hypothetical. What I want to portray is the different tone that can be carried when we focus specifically on women rather than using the familiar media approach that pits women against men.

**We must not risk distorting realities of women by the constant use of men's realities as the benchmark against which the lives of women are assessed.**

Consider the message that would be portrayed if, rather than comparing the number of hours of housework women and men do, we said:

- 60% of women with young children work outside the home.
- 40% of these families would fall below the poverty line if mothers were not working outside the home.
- On days when these women are working outside the home, they spend an average of 14 hours on employment, commuting, housework and their children.

The question I would pose in terms of trying to come up with a compromise solution is: “Does this need to be an either/or question or can we develop indicators in such a way that they reflect both gender parity and women's unique contributions”?

**Figure 4: Balancing Creating Cohesion and Embracing Diversity**

Creating cohesion	Embracing diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• encouraging diverse perspectives</li><li>• building consensus</li></ul>	

To this point, gender analysis has focused very heavily on program evaluation and service delivery. The development of gender equality indicators brings the balance of ensuring a continuing focus on larger goals.

Gender analysis must consider issues related to program evaluation. Does a particular program or service further the needs of women? However, if we allow gender equality indicators to be reduced to this level of detail, we run the risk of policy analysts becoming so narrowly focused on specific programs or policies that they lose sight of the bigger picture. We need gender equality indicators to provide the general direction in which we want to progress. There are many strengths to be gained from using gender equality indicators as government priorities. Status of Women officials, who are working toward the use of high level social indicators in government, discuss their benefits in terms of promoting inter-departmental cooperation and strategic action.

**Gender equality indicators are needed in order to provide the general direction in which to progress.**

Experiences with the use of outcome-focused measures in other countries have shown that to be most useful they must be presented at a higher level than what could be considered an output from government programs or policies. The broader social realities we wish to reflect with gender equality indicators go far beyond any particular government initiative. I think some of the problems that have arisen in other countries that have gone before us in these restructuring efforts is that they call indicators, outcomes. The very word outcome makes it sound as if we expect what we measure to be the final result of government programs and policies. It is not possible, or even desirable, to view major social and/or economic changes to be the end result of any one government initiative. If indicators become conceived as specific departmental outcomes, we lose the broader focus that is needed as the guide or goal toward which government work must be directed. The word indicator, presents a different, and I would argue, more constructive approach for keeping the broader perspective of social responsibilities before the eyes and in the minds of government workers.

*Back to the question of balance – we need to have performance measures and evaluations that bring gender analysis down to a level that identifies the effects of specific government programs and policies. However, on the other side of the scale, we need high level social indicators that ensure we are still going in the right direction.*

**Figure 5: Balancing Performance Measurement and Outcome Focus**

Performance measurement	Outcome focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>risks in reducing outcomes to performance measures</li> <li>benefits of maintaining a broader focus for gender equality indicators</li> </ul>	

One of the real benefits of the restructuring that is taking place in government is that it emphasizes more detailed analyses of the factors or forces that underlie a particular outcome or indicator. If we are to focus our attention on working toward a certain goal, we must first understand what conditions contribute to that goal. This more analytical approach to public policy fits very well with the basic premise and structure of gender analysis. When we ask a question like: “How can we promote high school completion?” it quickly becomes evident that gender analysis is needed to



formulate effective program development. The reasons girls and boys drop out of school are quite different; therefore, the programs developed to address this outcome would be quite different for girls and boys. When we come down to questions of really making things work, gender analysis is a necessary part of the puzzle.

While indicators are necessary to point the direction and identify trends, more detailed underlying analyses are needed to predict and prepare policy interventions. Many Status of Women officials have been very involved, for instance, in assessing the possible impacts of changes to the CPP and Seniors' Benefit for women. Detailed analyses can provide us with the ability to take a more future-oriented approach that can serve to identify and correct problems before they arise. This future orientation of gender analysis is particularly important because it is difficult to change policy or program decisions after they have been made. It is much more successful to prevent problems from arising by being involved during the early stages of developing public policy.

We must, however, address another issue of balance. While numbers are important for directing government action in a way that is reflective of reality rather than based on myth, Status of Women officials are quick to point out that numbers never tell the whole story. Good policy analysis and strategizing is in many ways more of an art than a science. There is a tenuous balance between making the most of statistical models and losing our grip on reality. While indicators and their underlying analyses are the foundation, good decision making is based on much more.

This balance of adhering to existing models or questioning their connection to reality is played out in the trade-offs between having repetitive well-known measures and having measures that are responsive to ever changing social realities.

**There is a trade-off between having repetitive, well-known measures and measures that are responsive to ever-changing social realities.**

**Figure 6: Balancing Statistical Models and Reality**

Statistical models	Reality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• new outcome focus in government supports gender analysis</li><li>• statistical models are important for action</li><li>• strict adherence to statistical models is counterproductive</li></ul>	

It is clear through my discussion that I have viewed the development and use of indicators as a process. To a large extent, the dissemination and use of indicators depends on creating consensus and ownership, defining as a social indicator rather than a program outcome, and embedding the indicators within a larger analytical framework. However, communication is also an important consideration.

The diverse audiences we have outlined as stakeholders of, and thus audiences for, gender equality indicators require different types of presentations. The balance I am speaking of in this aspect is between clarity and statistical complexity. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that indicators of social phenomena are complex by their very nature. While statistical measures must reflect this complexity, they must also be readily interpretable to all of the diverse stakeholders so that we do not lose anyone in the process. One way of dealing with this balancing act is to use a variety of communication tools and strategies that are suitable for different audiences. I will give the relationship between elected representatives and policy analysts as one example. It is important for elected representatives to keep a handle on the bigger picture and this is exactly what social indicators are designed to do. However, the increased use and misuse of statistical information has brought along with it a healthy dose of skepticism. It is the job of policy analysts and researchers in government to carefully assess the validity of the information they are to present to their ministers. While high level social indicators are useful for presentations to ministers, their use will not go far if policy advisors do not have the detailed breakdowns and analyses necessary to assess the credibility of the indicator and to place the information gained from the indicator within the context of government priorities, policies, and programs.

**Figure 7: Balancing Clarity of Presentation and Statistical Complexity**

Clarity of presentation	Statistical complexity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• success of communication and use depends on preceding steps</li><li>• different presentations for different audiences</li><li>• tying the numbers back to reality</li></ul>	

Throughout this presentation I have talked about the place of gender analysis within the new structures of government. I have talked about the

natural fit between gender analysis and this new approach to government work. The question one would naturally ask is “Why are we having so much difficulty implementing gender analysis”?

I would argue that many of the difficulties we have confronted with gender analysis are precisely because we are leaders in this area of government reform. I think it is clear to all of us who are involved in gender analysis that there is not a magic formula. We cannot say to a government department “add a plus b and divide by c” and you will get gender analysis. The number crunching exercise of separating out statistics on women and men, while I do not mean to undermine its importance, does not constitute all there is to gender analysis.

As various government departments and agencies are starting to engage in gender analysis we are increasingly hearing the comment: “but, that is not good gender analysis”. I believe this is because good gender analysis cannot be reduced to a prescribed formula, it depends instead on the commitment and creative capacity of people both inside and outside government working toward the goal of equity.

The obstacles we are encountering occur not because gender analysis does not fit in government restructuring, but instead because Canadian governments are just starting down this road. As new processes and procedures become more entrenched in government, the promotion of gender analysis will become easier. The obstacles we are confronting today can in fact be seen as our greatest opportunity. A number of Status of Women officials across the country are closely involved in the development of indicators or outcome measures for their jurisdictions. The knowledge gained from our deliberations on issues related to gender analysis put us in a good position to be leaders in these endeavours.

Our involvement in women's issues and gender analysis means that we have a good understanding of the intricate connections between “doing things right” and “doing the right thing”.

### **Figure 8: Is Gender Analysis Ahead of Its Time?**

- Is gender analysis ahead of its time?
- Obstacle or opportunity?

# Paradigms Implicit in Social and Economic Indicators

Notes for an address

by

Monica Townson

Monica Townson Associates Inc.

I have been asked to focus on the second of the four major themes of this symposium. That is what has been called “Paradigms implicit in social and economic indicators.” As you will have seen from the background information, various federal projects are now under way to develop social and economic indicators. The questions we are asked to deal with under this second theme are these:

- In what major areas do their underlying assumptions or paradigms about major policy-relevant social and economic variables and their causal linkages diverge or overlap? and
- What opportunities exist to achieve improved “rapprochement” among these projects after their divergences are considered?

The background paper on this theme was prepared by Mike McCracken of Informetrica and Katherine Scott of the Canadian Council on Social Development. I hope everyone has had a chance to read it, because it provides an excellent basis for the kind of discussion we will get into in the workshops. It also has some very useful suggestions for discussion questions and it highlights some of the assumptions that have been made in the development of social and economic indicators, that we will also want to question and discuss here over the next couple of days.

I’m not going to summarize the paper. But I do want to pick up on some of the key points, and perhaps take issue with one or two of them – or at least suggest that they be pushed a little further. By the way, when I refer to this background paper, I’ll call it “the Theme Paper” to distinguish it from other papers and documents on indicators that are out there for discussion.

First, let me say I think it is useful to make a distinction between gender equality indicators – that is, indicators that are developed specifically to measure gender equality; and social and economic indicators – that is

**Measures of gender equality must also be incorporated into the general social and economic indicators.**

indicators that are developed to measure progress of a society or of the economy, and that may or may not fully incorporate measures of gender equality. Both activities are needed and both are important.

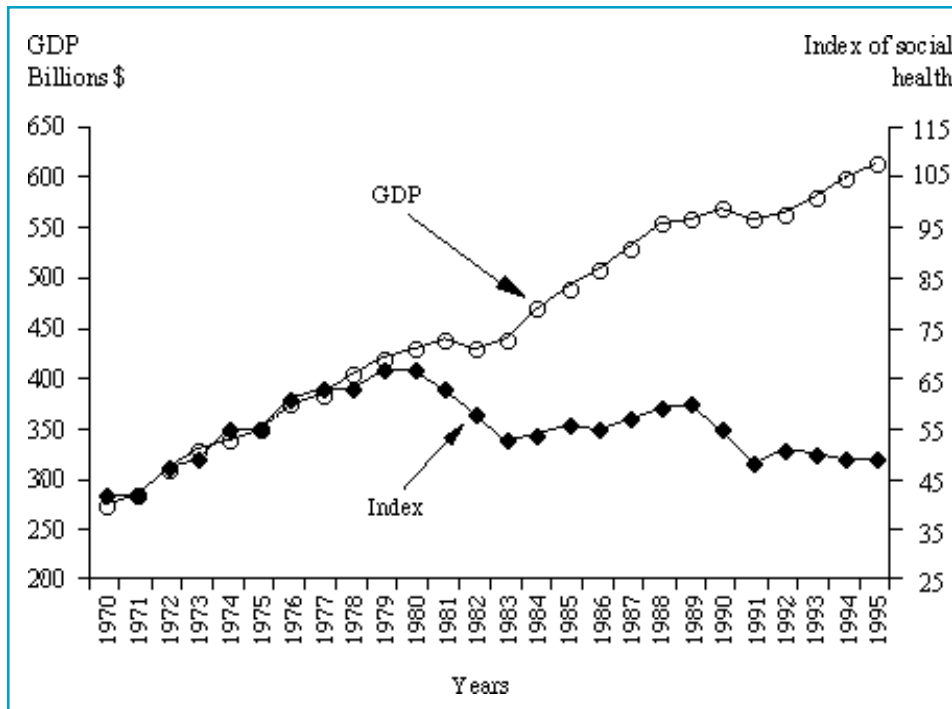
We need measures of gender equality, but they must also be fully incorporated into our general social and economic indicators. The Theme Paper refers to this process as the development of as “gender-sensitive indicators”. This is the area where I think we need to work towards the “rapprochement” that the workshop theme refers to.

Think, for a moment about the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), which the Prime Minister and many others tell us shows that Canada is “the best place in the world to live”. The HDI compares countries on three basic measures: life expectancy, educational attainment and per capita income. But the annual report on the HDI also includes a gender development index which adjusts the HDI for inequality between women and men. It turns out that when women’s experience is factored in, Canada is no longer top of the list. The question to be asked here, of course, is whether an indicator that fails to include gender equality measures can be considered adequate or credible as a measure of the “human development” of any society.

The Theme Paper does a good job of reviewing some of the economic indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment rates and other labour force indicators, and it explains how women’s experience and women’s work is excluded. As the Paper notes, “Indicators are not neutral statistical constructs. They validate particular world views and prioritize selected areas of knowledge.”

I think that’s why there has been such strong pressure over recent years for the development of social indicators or indicators of well-being – if only because the traditional economic indicators did not seem to reflect accurately what people felt was the reality of their lives. The Index of Social Health, constructed by Satya Brink and Allen Zeeman at Human Resources Development Canada, plots quite dramatically what has been going on. It shows that while GDP per capita has been steadily increasing, social health has declined.

**Figure 1: Index of Social Health and GDP (1986 Prices), Canada, 1970-1995**



But neither of the lines on that chart really incorporate women’s experience. As we know only too well, GDP per capita excludes much of the work that women do, because it is unpaid. And by the way, it’s an interesting question as to what would happen to that top line if unpaid work were included, not to mention how we would then interpret it.

The Index of Social Health, which is an adaptation of the well-known Fordham Index of Social Health, developed at Fordham University in New York State, uses 18 indicators, from infant mortality to child poverty, drug abuse, unemployment, and average weekly earnings. On some of the measures used, there are significant differences between women and men. But, as the Theme Paper points out, this index is “gender neutral.”

This is where I would have liked to see the authors of the Theme Paper take a stronger line. After all, earlier in the Paper, they say clearly that “Social and economic indicators based on a male standpoint not only privilege male experiences and standards, but also work to render invisible female experiences, activities and world views”. They also point out that research that is sometimes labeled as “gender neutral” might more appropriately be called “gender invisible.” It seems to me that this is a crucial point – especially if we are trying to get away from traditional indicators like GDP per capita and construct indicators that truly reflect the well-being of society.

**“Social and economic indicators based on a male standpoint not only privilege male experiences and standards, but also work to render invisible female experiences, activities and world views.”**

**Adaptation of the standard of measurement is a crucial problem that social indicators must attempt to overcome. It involves a radical and fundamental shift in thinking for many of those who are working on social indicator projects.**

In their June 1997 paper on “Measuring Social Well-Being”, Brink and Zeesman say that “Controversial indicators, that may have conflicting social or moral interpretations, such as teenage pregnancy or divorce, were excluded”. Would gender equality have been considered “too controversial” for inclusion? I don’t know. But I could find no mention of gender whatsoever in their paper. Surely there is some way to integrate the kind of work outlined in Status of Women’s Gender Indicators project into this Index of Social Health. The ISH includes a measure of the gap between rich and poor. What about a measure of the inequality between women and men? We need some creative thinking here. Perhaps we can generate some of that in the workshops today.

The *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, commissioned by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for the Status of Women, are described in the Theme Paper as “an innovative attempt to better understand gender equality in Canada” and I think that’s a good description. As the Theme Paper documents, women’s situation has often been measured against male standards. Gender Equality Indicators are intended to address that.

But that adaptation of the standard of measurement is a crucial problem that social indicators must attempt to overcome. I see this as a major challenge in the development of social indicators now being undertaken in Canada. I think it involves a radical and fundamental shift in thinking for many of those who are working on social indicator projects. This is also a challenge that the Theme Paper doesn’t really take up – although it may be that the results of our deliberations in the next two days will give the authors of the paper some ammunition with which to boost their arguments on this point and to come up with some recommendations on how it might be done.

I hope they will also be able to flesh out the section on “Future Directions for Research and Recommendations” as a result of this symposium. As they note, their lists of criteria for good indicators, for example, are “general lists” that do not address the gender dimension directly. Of course, many people now understand the importance of data that are disaggregated by gender. But I have a feeling that sometimes that understanding is quite superficial. People may not yet have truly comprehended the nature of the shift in thinking that is required if gender equality is to be completely integrated into their work. I hope we will be able to come up with some concrete ideas on how this fundamental shift in thinking could be made a reality. Let me just give you a couple of examples, that I think will illustrate what I mean.

An inter-departmental committee, incorporating a number of federal government departments, has recently been wrestling with the issue of social cohesion. It's one of those popular buzz words in Ottawa these days. No one knows what it means, but everyone is supposed to strive for it. The Committee came up with a definition of “social cohesion” as “an ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity in Canada”.

Let's just look at that for a moment from the point of view of gender equality. First, the use of the term “equal opportunity” would raise the hackles of anyone who has worked in employment equity and who understands that providing “equal opportunity” for disadvantaged people who have suffered generations of inequality, does not move us very far towards equality or justice – which presumably is what we need if we are to achieve “social cohesion”. And what about “shared values”? Do those shared values include values of gender equality? We don't know.

But the Committee has apparently developed an extensive program of research directed at improving “social cohesion” – whatever that term means. It has apparently also decided that gender breakdowns will be provided for all data to be used. It will study relations between different ethnic groups, regional differences, urban and rural differences and inter-generational equity – amongst other things – to see how these differences might have an impact on social cohesion. But apparently it has not occurred to the group to look at whether continued inequality between women and men may in itself undermine “social cohesion”.

The moral of this story, of course, is that gender issues must be central to the research and not just an added dimension of each topic studied. It is important in the selection of the data to be used; in the design of surveys and data collection methodology; in the interpretation of the data; and in the construction of indicators. I think it requires a really deep and fundamental understanding of – to use a jargon term – “the new paradigm,” or what we're trying to do. That understanding has to be almost at a gut level. How can we achieve it? This, I believe, is the real challenge in the development of gender-sensitive social indicators. In my view, disaggregation of data by gender is not enough to ensure this. But that's a question we may want to address in the workshops today. Let me just give you one more example, though.

Last week, *The Globe and Mail* ran a column by futurist John Kettle headed “Women snap up prime jobs.” It was based on employment data from the 1996 Census. In the 21 years from 1975 to 1996, Kettle said, women took 57% of new managerial positions and 65% of the

**Gender issues must be central to the research, and not just an added dimension of each topic studied.**



professional jobs. And he said, “That may shatter a few notions of the glass ceiling that is said to prevent them from getting their fair share of top jobs.”

Although he admitted that “the available statistics don’t detail the share of jobs held by women at each level of management or in the professions”, Kettle concluded that the numbers suggest “That something like a socio-economic revolution took place in the past two decades, making women closer to equal partners in management and the professions. Some of the numbers might even be used to suggest that men are now being discriminated against – or perhaps they prove that on an even playing field, women really are smarter.”

**These examples illustrate quite well how difficult it is for those who understand at some superficial level that gender differences must be addressed, but who don’t seem to have a clear understanding at a fundamental or gut level of just what that means in terms of the work they are doing.**

I’m sure I don’t have to spell out for the people in this room today what’s wrong with those conclusions. It’s the kind of thing the Theme Paper describes as a construction of equality where men are held up as the “standard” against which to measure progress. But I think these examples illustrate quite well how difficult it is for those who understand at some superficial level that gender differences must be addressed, but who don’t seem to have a clear understanding at a fundamental or gut level of just what that means in terms of the work they are doing.

How can this basic and fundamental understanding and awareness be inculcated in those who work on social and economic indicators and those who generate the data that are needed? I don’t know, but I believe it’s essential that we find some way to do it. Birgitta Hedman and Francesca Perucci, who presented a paper on “New Challenges in the Improvement of Gender Statistics” to the International Institute of Statistics last year, suggested that “All producers of statistics should be sensitized to gender issues.” But how do we make that operational?

The Theme Paper has some good examples of areas where women are invisible. The authors refer to data on part-time work generated by the Labour Force Survey, the design of which “is based on typical male patterns of work, and consequently does not capture the reality of women’s lives.” The Theme Paper also points out the gender bias in income and poverty studies based on data sources that are organized around the household as the unit of analysis. But even the most aware people – including some at Statistics Canada – still seem to be having trouble addressing that problem.

For instance, Status of Women’s paper on gender indicators points out that a measure of women’s wealth – that is financial wealth – remains a high

priority for future work. This paper also notes that “The family or household is not a suitable unit for gender equality indicators.” Yet Statistics Canada’s new Asset and Debt Survey – which, incidentally is the first to be undertaken since 1984 – will be based on the family, so it looks as if it will be impossible to generate any data from that survey on the financial situation or wealth of women. And this despite the efforts of a number of people to suggest a different approach. Sometimes, it seems, the reality of collecting the data needed to measure women’s equality is just too daunting.

I don’t want to end this on a pessimistic note. We shouldn’t forget that these are all really tough challenges. What I think is really exciting is that we are all here for the next two days ready to tackle them.

**Sometimes, it seems that the reality of collecting the data needed to measure women’s equality is just too daunting.**

# Procedures for Developing Gender-Sensitive Statistics: The Case of Sweden

Notes for an address

by  
Birgitta Hedman  
Head, Gender Statistics, Statistics Sweden

Working with gender statistics has led me from working in a man's world to working in a world of women and men. In the process, I have discovered that there is a considerable lack of knowledge and insight concerning gender statistics; what they are really about and why we have policies concerning gender equality.

The process of developing gender statistics is similar to the development of other types of statistics, with the exception that in the former we begin by addressing questions specifically related to the situation of women and men. What are the problems in society? What are the needs for improvement? What are the goals?

**Development of gender statistics must start with identification of questions related to gender concerns.**

## **Figure 1: Working for Equality Between Women and Men Implies To:**

- See and recognize women's and men's reality in various phases of the life-cycle and in various socio-economic groups.
- Discuss what is good and bad in women's and men's lives.
- Decide if the identified differences and similarities between women and men are acceptable.
- Identify problems related to existing inequalities and the underlying causes of the problems.
- Establish goals to reach equality in various spheres of society.
- Work actively to reach the goals for equality.

**Gender issues are relevant in all policy areas.**

In 1983, that was our starting point in Sweden. Statistics Sweden responded to the users' demands for improved statistics about the situations of women and men and as a result established a formal unit for gender statistics. A group of statisticians set forth to shed light on the situation. We assembled groups of users, and asked them to identify the problems with respect to areas where they needed improved statistics. The discussions lead us to characterize gender issues as any aspect of the lives of women and men, and gender relations that affect life in society and have an effect on development. Gender issues, therefore, are relevant in all policy areas.

### **Figure 2: Gender Issues**

- Any aspect of women's and men's lives and gender relations that affects life in society and has an effect on development.

Statistics provide a way to describe reality and to raise consciousness about the realities. Statistics also stimulate ideas, provide unbiased bases on which to build policies, and monitor change. But we need to address the following question: Whose reality do we find in official statistics today?

**Gender statistics imply statistics by sex, reflecting gender issues.**

We defined "gender statistics" as statistics concerning the situation of women compared to men. To achieve these comparisons, we need to ensure that all statistics on persons are collected by sex, that analysis preserves sex as a primary classification, and that analysis is focused on key gender-related issues, taking into account life-cycle and socio-economic factors. The statistics can also be used to form indicators when we know the nature of the problems that need to be addressed.

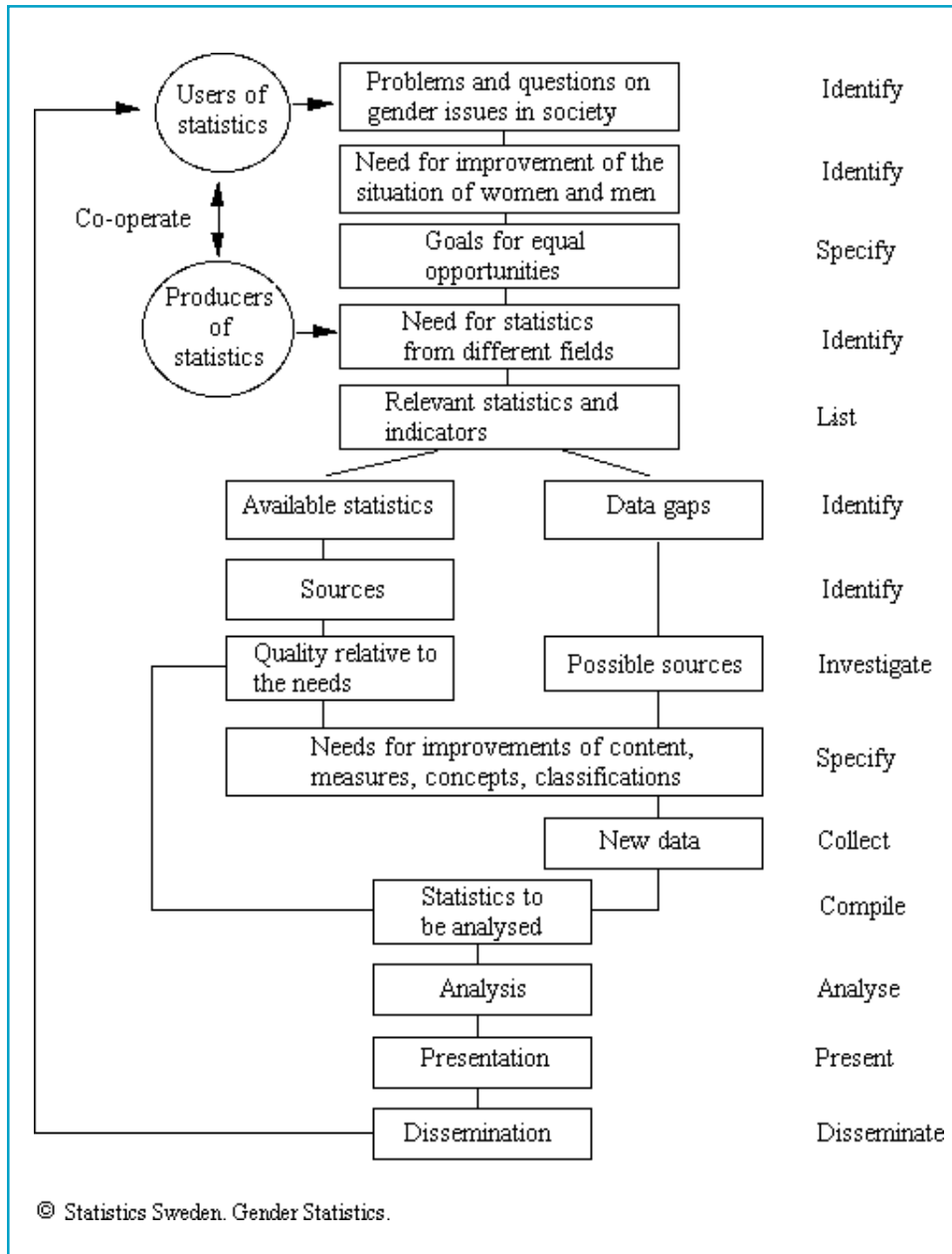
### **Figure 3: Gender Statistics**

Statistics on the situation of women compared to that of men in all spheres of society

- All statistics on individuals are collected by sex.
- All variables and characteristics are analysed and presented with sex as a primary and overall classification.
- All statistics reflect gender issues.

Fifteen years ago, when we had meetings with important potential users, we listed the statistics we thought they needed, after having listened to their questions. We started with a long list, and then narrowed it down. The types of statistics requested by the users covered most of the traditional statistical fields.

**Figure 4: Gender Statistics – The Production Process**



**The identification of needed statistics results both in user-friendly presentation of available data and development of new, gender-sensitive statistics.**

The next step was to go from needed statistics to available statistics. We compiled the available statistics with satisfactory quality and took notes on quality problems and data gaps. We found that most of the available statistics were gender blind. Those that were not tended to show data for women only; although some presented data for both sexes, men were always placed before women. Social and economic indicators were also to a large extent gender blind.

When we analyzed and presented the statistics, we tried to put ourselves in the users' place, addressing the questions that they wanted answered. We also gave priority to a gender statistics publication which would be suitable for a wide range of statistical users. We produced a booklet entitled *Women and Men in Sweden*, which became and continues to be the best seller of Statistics Sweden. It is produced every three years. In addition, lengthier books on specific gender concerns have been produced over the years, as well as fact sheets and posters focussing on gender statistics. We are often called upon to be lecturers at seminars and training courses on gender concerns. We present facts on the situation of women and men as an objective base for discussions.

**Improved gender statistics are specifically needed on economic and non-economic activities, poverty, household characteristics, health and domestic violence.**

*Women and Men in Sweden* has become a model for similar work in other countries. Work with these countries has revealed areas where the improvement of statistics is especially important. These areas include: measurement and valuation of unpaid work, statistics on the informal sector, satellite accounts, data on time use and time poverty, household information which would reveal all individuals for comparison purposes, without use of the concept of household head, and violence against women (and men).

### **Figure 5: Improve Quality of Existing Statistics and Fill in Data Gaps**

Important fields of work are:

- Measurement and valuation of paid and unpaid work.
- Measurement of poverty and access to resources.
- Household data and gender roles in the household.
- Morbidity and access to health services.
- Violence against women.

As a result of the progress made in Sweden, government regulations were passed in 1994 which provide that official statistics relating to individuals should, if no special contradictory reasons exist, be disaggregated by sex. Since 1994, a national policy also exists whereby all decisions at all levels of government should include analysis of the consequences for women and men respectively. Gender statistics are necessary in this work.

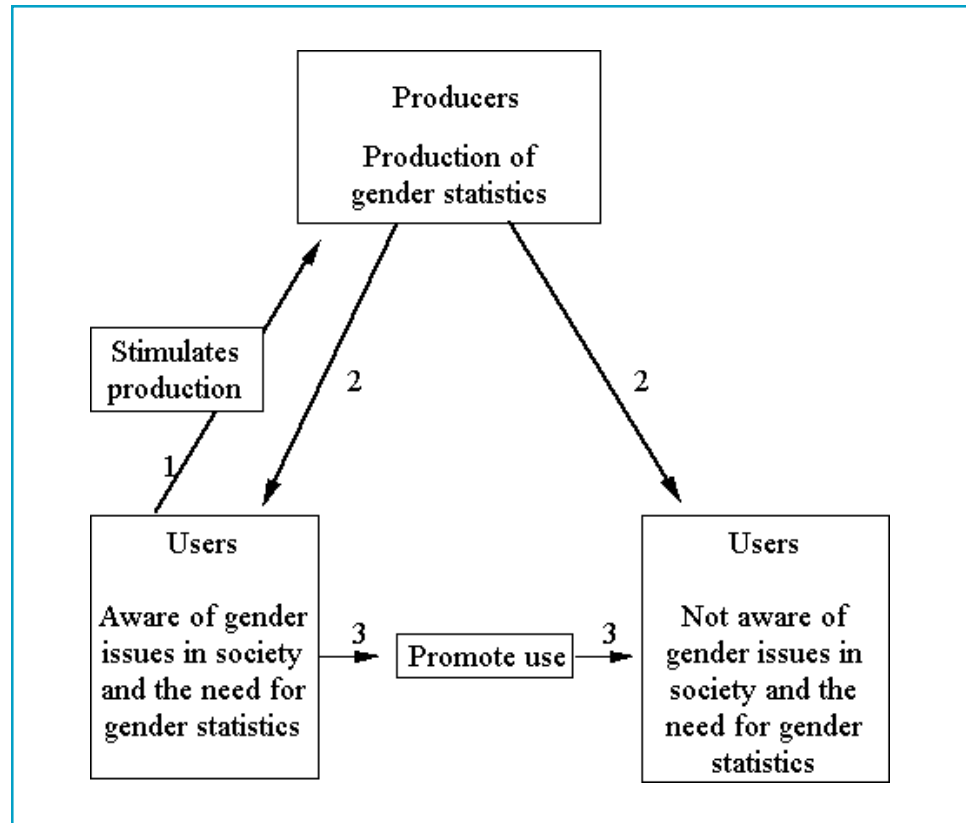
Knowledge of gender concerns is a prerequisite for action and change. Two years ago, Statistics Sweden began being actively involved in gender analysis training of top level managers in the public sector, including political leaders in the government. The training is organized by the government's Equality Affairs Division. During these seminars (usually half a day in length), the participants are asked to identify what things, in their perceptions, are good and bad for women and men in Sweden today. We continue to specify what is implied by the concept of equality between women and men and in the national policy. Statistics are used to illustrate the realities of women and men in various phases of the life cycle and in various socio-economic groups, related to the problems raised by the participants. Finally, we discuss what they felt should be changed in their fields of responsibility, and what they should do to bring about the needed changes.

Progress will require close and continued cooperation between the data users and the producers of statistics. Since gender statistics imply integration of a gender perspective in all statistical fields, it is the responsibility of all subject-matter statisticians to improve their statistics. The best way to achieve this is to have gender-sensitized users direct their needs to the various statistical specialists. An ongoing dialogue on gender issues and the need for statistics will improve the usefulness of the entire statistical system.

**Political leaders and public sector top level managers are trained in gender analysis.**

**Integrating a gender-perspective in statistics is the responsibility of all subject-matter statisticians.**

**Figure 6: Users and Producers of Gender Statistics**



**Figure 7: What Needs to be Done?**

- All producers of statistics should be sensitive to gender issues.
- A gender perspective should be integrated in all traditional statistical fields.
- Reach out to users with relevant statistical information on gender concerns.
- Users and producers of statistics should regularly:
  - review the adequacy of the official statistical system and its coverage of gender issues;
  - prepare a plan for needed improvements, where necessary.



# Gender Equality Indices in the Human Development Reports: Concepts, Measurements and Impact

Notes for an address

by

Selim Jahan

Deputy Director, Human Development Report Office  
United Nations Development Programme

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Guests, Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen: It gives me immense pleasure to be able to address this distinguished gathering. I would like to particularly thank Statistics Canada for giving me the opportunity to talk about the issue of gender equality and its measurements as reflected in the Human Development Reports. Needless to say, the topic is very close to my heart, both for personal as well as professional reasons.

Let me start with a personal note. I had the pleasure of sharing my life for the past twenty years with three exceptional ladies – my wife, of course, and my two teenage daughters. Over these years, I have constantly received their love, admiration and consideration. I could have been the victim of the tyranny of the majority, but that did not happen. Even though I represent one-fourth of our household, I have always been treated equally and fairly. So believe me, I know what gender equality is all about.

At a more professional level, I had the privilege of working on the *Human Development Report, 1995*, whose theme was gender and development. The basic message of the Report was development, if not engendered, is endangered. It is a simple statement, but with far-reaching implications. In my view, there are two loud implications and two silent implications.

The first loud implication is that the whole development process must be engendered. Often people talk of mainstreaming gender in the development process. But the problem with this approach is that current development paradigm itself is not gender-neutral. It has serious gender bias against women. If that is the case, then mainstreaming gender in the development process is not going to solve the problem. What we need is engendering the entire development paradigm.

The second loud implication is that development is endangered if it bypasses women. A development process cannot be sustainable if it ignores 50% of humanity. Sustainability does not mean environment only, it also requires institutional, political and social sustainability. A development process which is not sensitive to half of human kind can thus not be sustainable.

Coming to the two silent implications of the above statement, the first latent implication of it is that gender equality is not an issue of data, information or indicators only. We cannot understand the problem only by looking at numbers. Gender equality is more than that. At the household level, it reflects various power structures, at the community level, it is about gender roles of women and men; and at the state level, it is an issue of political economy. We should, therefore, not reduce it to a mechanical problem only.

**Gender equality is central to the human development paradigm.**

The second silent implication emphasizes that gender issues should not be treated as something at the end-of-the day business. Often while discussing developmental issues, we presume that we can take care of the gender issues after we have dealt with all the hard-core issues. There cannot be a Band-Aid approach to gender problems.

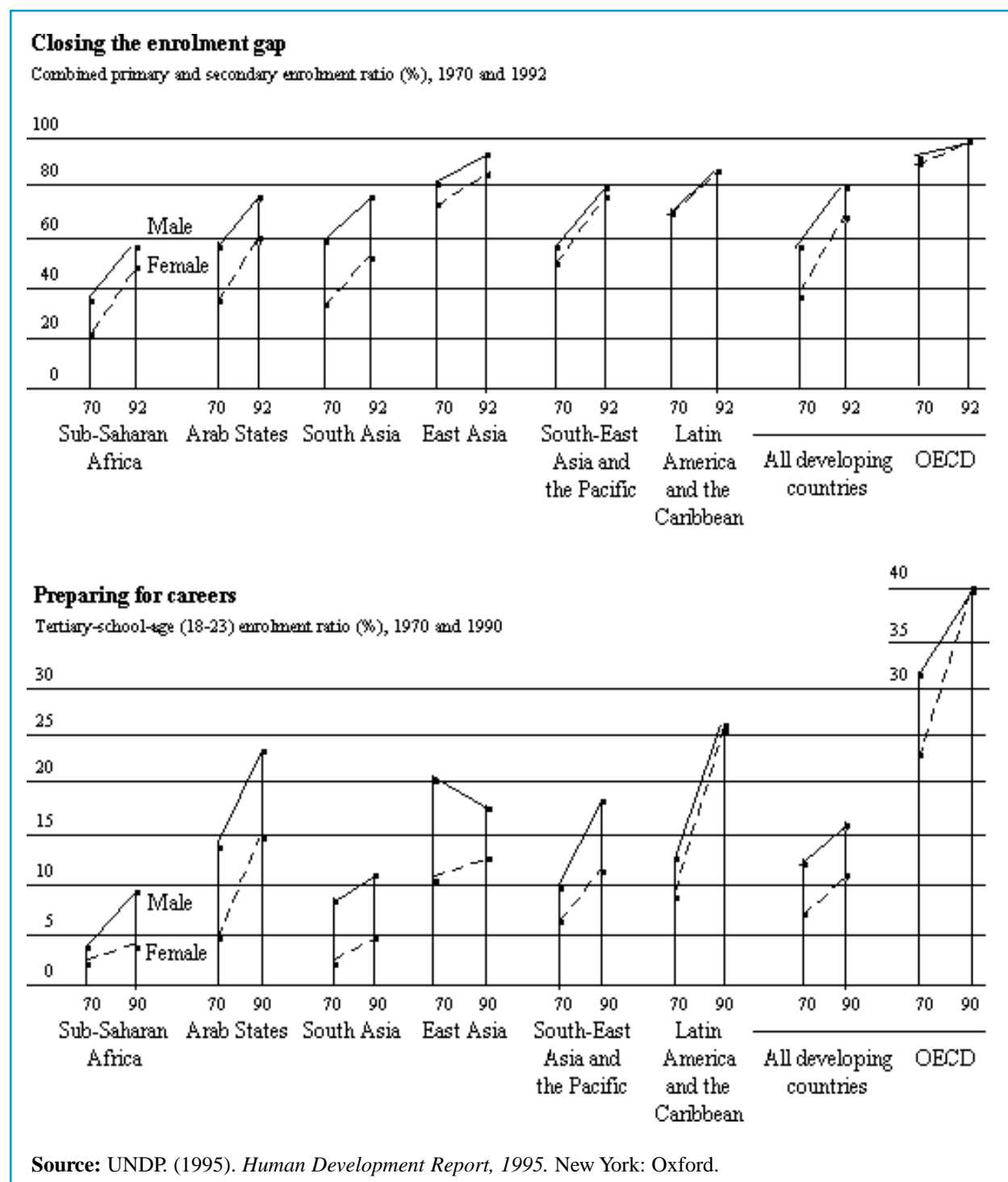
In dealing with the issue of gender equality from a human development perspective, let me focus on three issues:

- the philosophy of gender equality in the human development perspective;
- the gender equality indices in the Human Development Reports – their construction and the results with a special reference to Canada; and
- the impact of these exercises.

Taking the first issue first, gender equality is central to the human development paradigm. Human development is defined as a process of enlarging choices – economic, political, social, cultural. Some of the choices are more basic such as leading a long and healthy life, to be knowledgeable and to have a decent standard of living. But for the exercises of choices, basic and otherwise, one needs enhancement of capabilities and expansion of opportunities.

If now, choices of the half of the humanity are restricted, that is not human development. Over the years, considerable progress have been made in reducing female-male gaps in capabilities (Figure 1), yet significant gender gaps remain in areas of opportunities.

**Figure 1: Women Move Ahead in Education and Health**



Both the economic and the political space are still monopolized by men (Figure 2). With such gender disparity, human development would remain a myth. The Human Development Reports have consistently argued that human development requires regional, ethnic and rural-urban equity, but most importantly, gender equality. The *1997 Human Development Report on Poverty Eradication for Human Development* categorically stated that without gender equality, human poverty eradication is not possible.

Now going beyond philosophies of human development and gender equality, lots of work have been done on the issue of gender equality indicators and indices. When the first Human Development Report was initiated in 1990, it also introduced a composite index for measuring the average achievements in basic human development. It is called the Human Development Index (HDI). Remember that the concept of human development is broader than the measure. Even though the HDI measures average achievements in human capabilities, it did not represent gender disparities in achievements nor could it reflect significant gender gaps in opportunities.

**The 1995 Human Development Report, introduced two gender-related composite indices – the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM).**

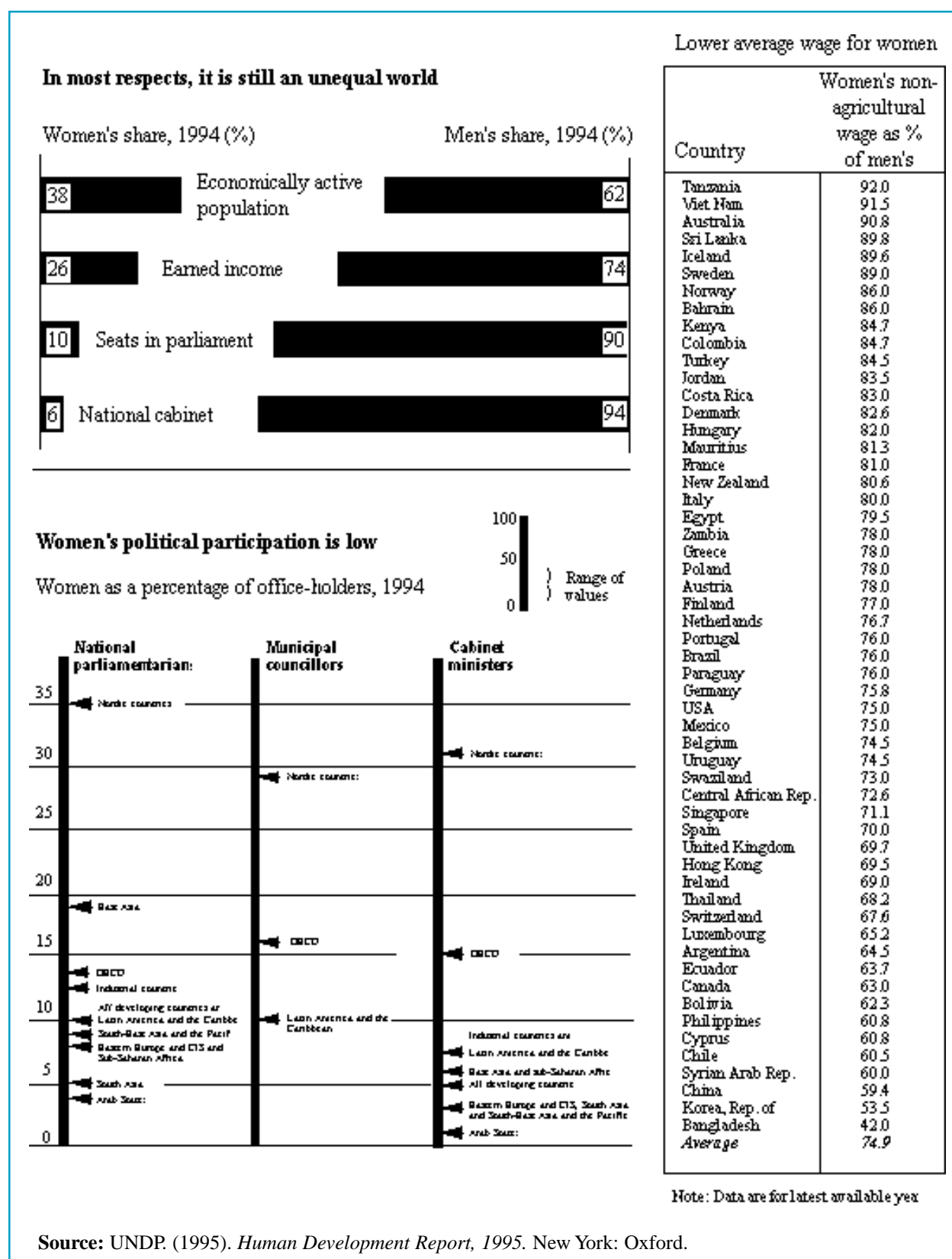
To capture these aspects of human development, the *1995 Human Development Report* introduced two gender-related composite indices – the Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) (Figure 3).

Two questions – “What is the difference between HDI and GDI?” and second, “Why did we need GEM?” On the first issue, GDI measures achievements in the same basic capabilities as the HDI does, but takes note of inequalities in achievements between women and men. Thus the GDI is the HDI adjusted for gender-disparities.

We need a separate measure for opportunities mainly because GDI measures only capabilities and secondly, the gender disparities in opportunities are enormous (Figure 4). One has to capture the disparities in opportunities.

Figure 5 lists the variables that have been included in the construction of the HDI, GDI and GEM. There have been two major criticisms of the GDI and the GEM. First, with regard to the GDI, it has been argued that the index is dominated by the income variable and it is constructed with weak data. Second, with regard to GEM, it has been complained to be top-down as women’s participation and empowerment have been defined in terms of their participation in labour markets, in administration and management, parliaments, cabinets etc. Questions have been raised as to “are not African women who spend time for fetching water and firewood, taking care of their families, participating”.

**Figure 2: But Gaps Persist in Economic and Political Participation**



**Figure 3: The HDI, the GDI and the GEM**

**While the GDI focuses on expansion of capabilities, the GEM is concerned with the use of these capabilities.**

**HDI**

The Human Development Index (HDI) measures the average achievement of a country in basic human capabilities. The HDI indicates whether people lead a long and healthy life, are educated and knowledgeable and enjoy a decent standard of living. The HDI examines the average condition of all people in a country: distributional inequalities for various groups of society have to be calculated separately.

**GDI**

The Gender-Related Development index (GDI) measures achievement in the same basic capabilities as the HDI does, but takes note of inequality in achievement between women and men. The methodology used imposes a penalty for inequality, such that the

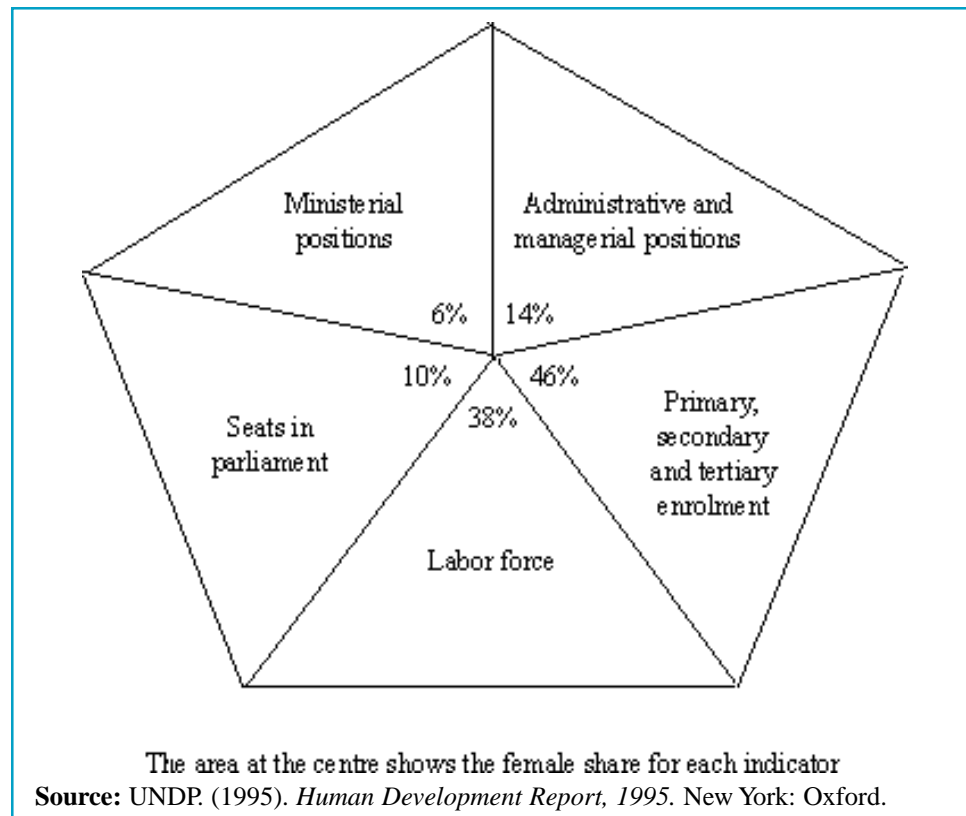
GDI falls when the achievement levels of both women and men in a country go down or when the disparity between their achievements increases. The greater the gender disparity in basic capabilities, the lower a country's GDI compared with its HDI. The GDI is simply the HDI discounted, or adjusted downwards, for gender inequality.

**GEM**

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) examines whether women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and take part in decision-making. While the GDI focuses on expansion of capabilities, the GEM is concerned with the use of those capabilities to take advantage of the opportunities of life.

**Source:** UNDP. (1995). *Human Development Report, 1995*. New York: Oxford.

**Figure 4**



**Figure 5: Measuring Progress in Gender Equality – The HDI the GDI and the GEM**

### **HDI – Human Development Index**

Measures achievement in basic capabilities that expand choices.

Indicates whether people:

- lead long and healthy life (life expectancy),
- are educated and knowledgeable (school enrollment),
- enjoy a decent standard of living (adjusted income).

### **GDI – Gender-Related Development Index**

Genderized HDI – or HDI adjusted for gender inequality.

### **GEM – Gender Empowerment Measure**

Measures participation in national, economic and political decision-making. Components include male and female shares of:

- parliamentary seats,
- administrator and managerial positions,
- professional and technical occupations,
- earned income.

**Source:** UNDP. (1995). *Human Development Report, 1995*. New York: Oxford.

Both these criticisms are well-taken. And we are taking appropriate measures to improve the situation. Income data that go into the GDI are being improved and information on other aspects of female participation, which are not so top-down, are being explored. But in spite of all their limitations, both GDI and GEM have been able to draw attention to issues of gender disparities in capabilities and opportunities and thus have contributed to policy debates and dialogues.

What do the GDI and GEM results reveal? Let us first look at individual results and then analyze the overall results. The GDI has been constructed for 146 countries and Canada tops the list. But a more in-depth analysis of the GDI results reveal that:

- No country in the world treats its women as well as its men. Gender disparity is a reality in every country and it is a question of degree

**No country in the world treats its women as well as its men.**

only. Sweden and Norway may treat their women relatively better than Bangladesh or Niger, but even in Sweden and Norway, there are gender disparities in capabilities.

- Significant progress has been made in reducing the gender gaps in capabilities, but still there is a long way to go.
- Gender equality is independent of high incomes or higher economic growth. Thus a country does not have to be rich or to be fast growing to treat its women fairly and equally. Rather, gender equality has been found to be correlated with multidimensional poverty.

**Significant progress has been made in reducing gender gaps in capabilities.**

The GEM has been constructed for 94 countries. Note that when we move from capabilities to opportunities, even the limited set of data are not available for the same number of countries for which capability data are available. It thus points to the need for collecting more and better data on the opportunities side of women. The GEM results reveal that:

- Some developing countries are ahead of industrial countries – Barbados ahead of Belgium, Trinidad and Tobago ahead of Italy and Portugal, Bahamas ahead of the United Kingdom, France behind Botswana and Japan behind China and Mexico. Thus providing opportunities to women does not depend on per capita income level.
- On the other hand, in countries where multidimensional poverty is high, the GEM values and rankings are low. Thus countries like Mauritania, Togo and Pakistan are at the bottom of the GEM League Table and all of these countries have a Human Poverty Index value of more than 45%.

With regard to the overall results, let us first look at the HDI, GDI and GEM values of various regions (Table 1). Three observations can be pertinent: first, for any region, as one moves from the HDI to the GDI and the GEM values, such values gradually drop. It indicates that in every region, when the average achievements in human capabilities are adjusted for gender-disparities, the region's position gets worse. Second, comparing the GDI and the GEM values, one finds that women's opportunities get shrunk vis-a-vis their capability building. Third, Asia with a per capita GNP of \$638, which is nearly one third of the per capita GNP of \$1,662 for the Arab States, has GDI and GEM values higher than those of the Arab States.



**Table 1: Tabular Comparisons**

	HDI	GDI	GEM	GNP per capita (US\$)
	1992	1992	1992	1992
World (104 countries)	0.6653	0.6050	0.3737	4,470
Developing countries (81 countries)	0.5939	0.5311	0.3225	924
Industrial countries (23 countries)	0.9168	0.8650	0.5542	21,352
Africa (27 countries)	0.4023	0.3771	0.2791	365
Arab (11 countries)	0.6464	0.5278	0.2491	1,662
Asia (17 countries)	0.6219	0.5610	0.3036	638
LAC (25 countries)	0.7509	0.6701	0.4181	2,799
Least Developed Countries (28 countries)	0.3862	0.3618	0.2671	356

**Note:** Calculated for 104 countries for which estimates of HDI, GDI and GEM are available.  
**Source:** UNDP. (1995). *Human Development Report, 1995*. New York: Oxford.

Thus building women’s capabilities and creating opportunities for them do not depend on income levels. Figure 6 summarizes all these issues more graphically and concludes that gender equality is an universal problem – both in poor and rich countries.

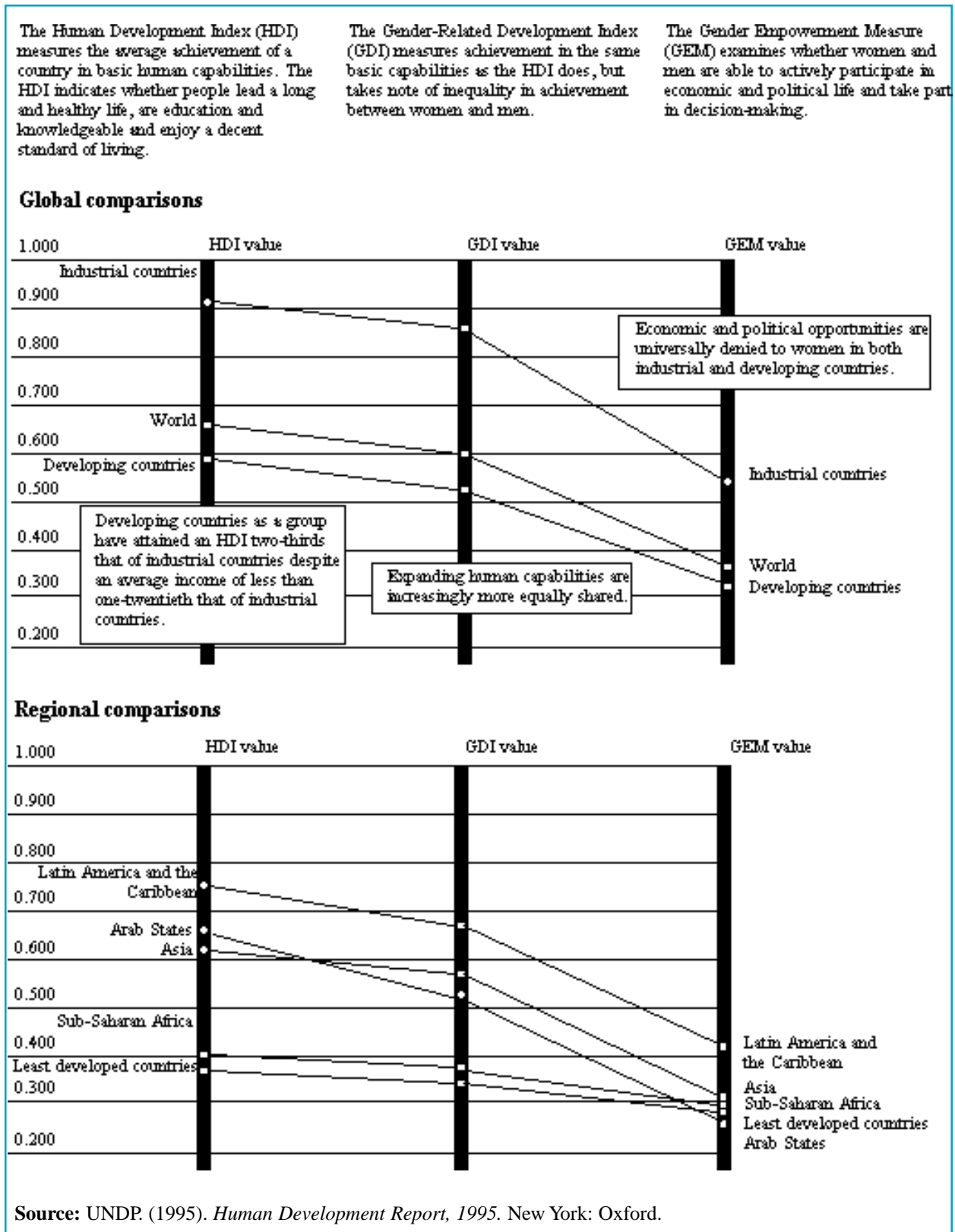
Looking at the situation in Canada now, it has ranked number 1 both in HDI and GDI in 1997 and in fact, it has topped the HDI list for the past few years. The HDI value for Canada is 0.960, its GDI value is 0.939 and the GEM value is 0.700.

For quite some time, Statistics Canada has been doing some great work with regard to indicators of gender equality. It is heartening to see that Canada has produced this wonderful and useful document on *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* under the auspices of the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. It has got a tremendous amount of information and represents a good reference situation analysis with regard to gender equality. I have no doubt that this can be used as a model in other countries who are in the process of highlighting gender inequality in their own societies. Definitely, such a book in a country like Bangladesh would not be as comprehensive as in Canada, but it would be a good start and all the blanks in that book would serve the purpose of creating demand and pressure on people concerned to collect more data on gender-related indicators.

**For quite some time, Statistics Canada has been doing some great work with regard to indicators of gender equality.**

When I visited Canada in 1996, there was a big article in *The Globe and Mail* saying that more women are primary breadwinners in Canada. The write-up was on the basis of a study by Statistics Canada highlighting that nearly one in every four working wives earn more than their spouses and

**Figure 6: Gender Inequality is a Universal Problem, Both in Rich Countries and Poor**



some provide as high 75% of the family income. Such projection in the press removes a lot of misgivings about gender equality and creates a new kind of awareness.

On the issue of the impacts of various gender indices constructed by Human Development Reports, they have been used by institutions of civil society, women’s movements and development activists for advocacy purposes. For example, such indicators have been taken seriously in different countries to put pressure on respective governments and in Japan, it has led to changes in laws. Similarly, the *Human Development Report, 1995* has helped repelling biased laws against domestic violence in many Latin American countries. The *Human Development Report, 1995* has been used as a major document in the Beijing Conference.

**The *Human Development Report, 1995* has been used as a major document in the Beijing Conference.**

Second, in various countries, the GDI has been disaggregated to provide a mirror to the policy-makers. Such exercises have been carried out both in India and the Philippines (Tables 2 and 3). It is obvious from the Indian

**Table 2: Gender-related Development Index for Indian States, 1991-92**

GDI Rank	Gender-Related Development Index (GDI)	Share of earned income (%)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 1990-92		Adult literacy rate 1991 (%)		
		Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	
1	Kerala	0.565	12.4	87.6	74.4	68.8	80.6	91.7
2	Maharashtra	0.492	29.4	70.6	64.7	63.1	44.2	74.4
3	Gujarat	0.437	26.8	73.2	61.3	59.1	41.8	70.4
4	Himachal Pradesh	0.432	37.5	62.5	64.2	63.8	35.5	64.4
5	Punjab	0.424	5.9	94.1	67.5	65.4	41.8	60.5
6	Karnataka	0.417	25.4	74.6	63.6	60.0	37.7	65.3
7	Tamil Nadu	0.402	21.4	78.6	63.2	61.0	35.8	65.0
8	West Bengal	0.399	8.0	92.0	62.0	60.5	42.8	69.3
9	Andhra Pradesh	0.371	27.2	72.8	61.5	59.0	27.3	52.4
10	Haryana	0.370	7.0	93.0	63.6	62.2	27.0	64.3
11	Assam	0.347	23.7	76.3	53.8	54.8	33.9	62.4
12	Orissa	0.329	19.1	80.9	54.8	55.9	29.0	62.5
13	Madhya Pradesh	0.312	25.4	74.6	53.5	54.1	24.3	56.6
14	Rajasthan	0.309	23.0	77.0	57.8	57.6	17.5	52.7
15	Bihar	0.306	21.8	78.2	58.3	60.4	18.2	55.3
16	Uttar Pradesh	0.293	12.9	87.1	54.6	56.8	20.6	53.6
	INDIA	0.388	23.2	76.8	59.4	59.0	33.9	62.4

**Source:** Shira Kumar, A.K. (1996). *UNDP's Gender-Related Development Index: A Comparison for Indian States*. UNICEF: Delhi.

**Table 3: Gender Development Indices (1990-1994)**

	GDI		HDI		Gender disparity (%)	
	1990	1994	1990	1994	1990	1994
NCR	0.467	0.449	0.944	0.925	50.5	51.4
I – LLCOS	0.228	0.230	0.592	0.630	61.4	63.5
II – Cagayan Valley	0.182	0.231	0.560	0.640	67.4	63.9
III – Central Luzon	0.266	0.271	0.695	0.709	61.7	61.9
IV – Southern Tagalog	0.257	0.283	0.654	0.714	60.7	60.4
V – Bicol	0.165	0.193	0.488	0.570	66.1	66.0
VI – Western Visayas	0.183	0.207	0.527	0.594	65.3	65.2
VII – Central Visayas	0.184	0.201	0.528	0.580	65.1	65.3
VIII – Eastern Visayas	0.171	0.182	0.473	0.538	63.7	66.2
IX – Western Mindanao	0.119	0.104	0.458	0.524	74.0	80.2
X – Northern Mindanao	0.179	0.195	0.531	0.578	66.4	66.3
XI – Southern Mindanao	0.205	0.239	0.571	0.621	64.2	61.5
XII – Central Mindanao	0.125	0.157	0.479	0.556	73.9	71.8

**Note:** The index of gender disparity is obtained by taking the percentage difference between the HDI and the GDI, i.e.  $100 \times (\text{HDI} - \text{GDI})/\text{HDI}$ .

**Source:** UNDP (1994). *Philippine Human Development Report, 1994*. UNDP: Manila.

case that women in Bihar are doubly deprived, first because they live in a more backward region and secondly because they are women. A similar case can be made for women from West Mindanao, in the case of the Philippines.

Third, both GDI and GEM are being explored more in academic researches and queries. More innovative experiments on these two indices are being pursued at the International Social Studies Centre in the Hague. Students are preparing dissertations on these indices. It can thus be hoped that in future we shall be able to refine these indices further.

Fourth, both GDI and GEM have contributed to policy debates and dialogues at the national and the sub-national levels. Disaggregation of these indices have provided some guidance as to where to redirect resources in order to deal both with deprivations and gender-disparities.

The *Human Development Report, 1995* also made a number of policy recommendations for gender equality which have been taken quite seriously by various national governments (Figure 7).

**Both GDI and GEM have contributed to policy debates and dialogues at the national and the sub-national levels.**

## Figure 7: Five Point Strategy for Gender Equality

- Legal equality – within the next 10 years:
  - unconditional ratification of CEDAW by 90 countries,
  - international NGO – WWW – to report on legal discrimination,
  - pools of legal professionals,
  - legal literacy campaigns,
  - legal ombudswomen,
  - violence against as a weapon of war to be recognized as a war crime,
  - UN monitoring of CEDAW.
- Changes in institutional arrangements for more choices in the workplace.
- 30% threshold, a minimum women's share in political and economic decision making at the national level.
- Gender equality in education, health and credit including control of fertility.
- National and international resources for empowerment of women.

**Source:** UNDP. (1995). *Human Development Report, 1995*. New York: Oxford.

Let me now make three concluding remarks with regard to gender equality. First, gender equality does not mean that people have to change their identity or women have to be like men. What it means is that, irrespective of their sex, people must have equal access to capabilities and opportunities and no one should be discriminated on the basis of her sex.

Second, gender equality does not mean that there should be antagonism between women and men. Gender equality does not imply changing the roles of women only, but it cannot be achieved without changing the roles of men too.

Third, gender equality should not be a blanket mechanical issue irrespective of the location and position of women. My grandmother in a village in Bangladesh, my mother in a small city in Bangladesh, my sister in the capital city of Bangladesh, my wife in New York and my daughter in Montreal have some common issues, but let us also recognize that they have different sets of problems. Gender equality should build on the commonalties, but it should also recognize the differences.

**Gender equality does not mean that there should be antagonism between women and men.**

Last but not least, human development is all about choices. The kind of choices that we make today with regard to girls versus boys, with regard to women versus men would determine what sort of world we shall have tomorrow. The kinds of choices we make today will determine the lives of our children and grandchildren. Let us be wise enough to make the right kinds of choices, let us be prudent enough to set our priorities right, and let us be bold enough to do what is needed to be done. Let us not forget that in the ultimate analysis, human destiny is a choice, and not a chance.

Thank you all.

# Thematic Summary of Workshop and Plenary Session Discussions<sup>1</sup>

## Key Recommendations

During the workshops that were held over the two days, participants developed proposals and recommendations to advance developments in the area of gender equality. Although the recommendations were not submitted to the plenary sessions for formal debate and amendment, all were read at the plenary sessions by the workshop leaders. The following is a selection among the recommendations. These and additional recommendations may be found below within the contexts of the themes to which they apply.

- Given the interest that is stimulated by the availability, usage and promotion of gender-based analysis, as well as the desire to obtain and share related statistical data, and experience across many sectors, it is proposed that Status of Women Canada and Statistics Canada form an ad hoc working group comprised of persons present at the symposium. This ad hoc working group will deliberate to develop a plan of action designed to assure concrete results from the symposium with the goal of facilitating the exchange of information, expertise and resources among non-government organizations, government officials, and politicians. This group will also work towards the goal of circulating information about best practices, to promote the emergence of appropriate strategies, and to raise the awareness of gender issues among bureaucrats, politicians and the public with due attention to the implied funding requirements.
- With the goal of facilitating improved access to the data and related information concerning the equality of the sexes for the purposes of

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<sup>1</sup> Although the workshops had distinct themes, the themes had over-lapping contents. As a result, there were many recurrences of ideas and recommendations (with variations in wording, as one might expect) among the workshops. Furthermore, the reports from workshops to the plenary sessions were designed to promote linkages of related ideas coming from diverse sources. As a result, many statements in this thematic summary use wording that is not identical with what one would find in transcripts of the actual workshop summaries. However, workshop leaders were asked to review this text with a view to identifying serious departures from the intents of the main ideas and recommendations that developed in their groups.

research and participation in the policy process, Statistics Canada should take measures to further democratize access to data, and to reduce the cost of access to its data banks. This would be done in collaboration with its partners in the collection and dissemination of data. These measures should be informed by consultations involving diverse groups, including women's organizations and aboriginal groups, to improve its understanding of the needs of these groups for information that is relevant to gender-based analysis. Results of these consultations should be published.

- Training of providers and users of data is important. Politicians and senior policy advisors, in particular, need training about gender sensitivity, the uses of gender indicators and gender-based analysis. This training is needed if gender-based analysis is to become integrated into decision-making within government.
- Statistics Canada should include NGOs in its data liberation initiative. This will help the non-government sector to become more well informed users of data and to play a more prominent role in interpreting findings.
- Statistics Canada should take steps to ensure that gender-based analysis is integrated into its on-going statistical activities.
- Proposals for research submitted by academics should, where appropriate, be required to give evidence that the work will include relevant gender-based analysis.
- Builders of indicators should include a gender dimension in their work, or clearly specify why they have not done so. For example, lack of data or demonstration that gender-based analysis makes no difference to the behaviour of the indicator.

## **Improving Gender-Based Analysis**

### *Elements of Gender-Based Analysis*

Governments in Canada and around the world have recognized the importance of gender-based analysis as a tool for informed policy-making. In conducting gender-based analysis, we need to consider the following: what is the issue/problem, who is affected, what are the appropriate reference groups, how long will the effect last, what are the relevant data sources and their strengths and deficiencies, and what strategies are useful to ensure the best use of existing data and to address deficiencies when alternative policy options are considered?



### *Progress in Implementing Gender-Based Analysis*

There is still a large number of people who are skeptical of the value of doing gender-based analysis, and among them is a subset comprised of persons who believe that inequalities pertaining to women's status have been solved. Evidence is needed to show them the nature and extent of gender gaps, to test assumptions and to demonstrate how policy can be improved by taking gender differences and similarities into account. Even where key people in an organization are persuaded that gender-based analysis should be done, there remains a large step involving training and building of capacity to carry out this analysis.

### *Examples of Provincial Initiatives to Advance Gender-Based Analysis*

*Nova Scotia* is engaged in developing indicators of economic gender equality, as well as in gender-based analysis. The work is done first with ministries that are interested in pursuing such matters.

*Saskatchewan* has worked on the task of stimulating the use of gender-based analysis to develop information that influences the formation of policies.

*Québec* has formed an inter-ministerial committee concerning gender-based analysis, which includes eight ministries and organizations, among them “le ministère du Conseil exécutif” and “le Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor”. The latter two are co-leaders of the project along with “le Secrétariat à la condition féminine”. The committee has a three-year mandate to develop a set of mechanisms and tools with pilot Ministries in the economic and social fields. The first strategy is to avoid a “wall to wall” approach to the government. Instead, the strategy involves working with a small set of Ministries and selected policies within those Ministries, who will guide the development of the necessary instruments.

### *Determinants of Future Success in Implementing Gender-Based Analysis*

There are several factors that will influence the future extent of use of gender-based analysis. These factors include political activism designed to create the political will to use gender-based analysis, education and promotion of awareness among the larger public, and success in promoting the concept that gender-based analysis is not designed to be used only to serve women's interests. Other influential factors involve the production of more gender-based analysis guides and training tools, case studies that are usable in both the public and private sectors, as well as the availability of specific plans and resources for carrying out gender-based analysis within and outside of government.

Discussions in two workshops lead to lists of fields where gender-based analysis is needed or would be useful. These lists are not reproduced here because valid arguments in at least two speeches make it clear that it is, in fact, quite difficult to pinpoint economic and social policy concerns where opportunities for useful gender-based analysis would not arise. The surprise, as one speaker pointed out, is how far senior policy analysts can go in their thinking with little apparent attention to the centrality of gender-related issues in our society. In short, lack of scope (intrinsic to policy concerns) for using gender-based analysis will not be a factor in helping to determine future success in implementing gender-based analysis.

### *Partnering with Policy Analysts*

In attempting to increase the gender sensitivity of policy analysts, focus should be placed upon working along with them in specific projects. This includes involving the analysts in the creation of tools for gender-based analysis, rather than first developing the tools and then trying to issue prescriptions concerning their use. The tools in question include methodological ones as well as training tools. This approach of emphasizing partnerships with policy analysts early in the creation of tools will increase the chances that the positive values of gender-based analysis will be perceived and pursued by those analysts. (N.B. Due to its significance, this recommendation can also be found in the section entitled “Building Alliances to Improve Effectiveness”.)

### *Recommendations to Statistics Canada*

Statistics Canada should take steps to ensure that gender-based analysis is integrated into its on-going statistical activities.

### *Recommendations to Organizations that are Funding Academic Research*

Proposals for research submitted by academics should, where appropriate, be required to give evidence that the work will include relevant gender-based analysis.

### *Recommendations to the Designers of Social and Economic Indicators*

Builders of indicators should include a gender dimension in their work, or clearly specify why they have not done so. For example, lack of data or demonstration that gender-based analysis makes no difference to the behaviour of the indicator.

## Improving Access to Needed Data and the Usage of Available Data

### *Citizens' Entitlement to Improved Access to Statistics Canada Data at No Charge*

A distinction was made between “customers” and “citizens” in thinking about users of statistical data. Some data are available to citizens at no charge; but are these provisions adequate to promote an acceptable percentage of well-informed citizenry in Canada? There is a problem when statistical agencies treat people as revenue sources through “user pay” principles, while citizens are expected to make informed representations of their views in political debates. Also non-government organizations (NGOs), acting as associations of citizens that are vital to civil society, will become more effective users of Statistics Canada data if easier access routes to data and lowered costs of using those routes are achieved.

The United States Bureau of Labor has developed a facility that allows data users to create cross-tabulations from microdata bases by using their World Wide Web browsers. Users simply make choices among a sequence of menus, and the tabulations are then generated and returned to the users.

### *Make Gender Equality Indicators More Understandable Among a Wide Variety of Stakeholders*

For gender equality indicators to be better used in policy-making they need to be made more understandable among all groups involved, and the user-friendliness of their presentation should be continued and improved.

The needs of the groups that wish to use information should be carefully considered when designing the delivery of information to them. The relevant groups include policy analysts, non-government organizations and decision-makers, whose information requirements may differ. In this connection, there should be more discussion about what are various stakeholders' information needs, and how they can be assisted to use the available data more effectively.

Improved representation of municipal-level organizations is needed in discussions and work concerning gender equality indicators and gender-based analysis.

This widened participation in indicator development is helpful for another reason. Indicators are designed to measure a gap between the desired level or state and current conditions. It is preferable if the view of the desired

state can be developed in a fully participatory fashion. This will involve the achievement of more effective links among NGOs, policy-makers, statisticians, and researchers.

With the help of these strengthened links, the development of gender equality indicators should be accompanied by specific plans to stimulate the use of such indicators. Such plans would be laid in the light of consideration of barriers to that use. As an instance of these barriers, NGOs highlighted their lack of resources for carrying out data analysis, as well as difficulties in gaining access to data, and in developing knowledge about data sources.

*To be More Useful, Gender Equality Indicators Need to be More Comprehensive, and Should Include Analysis*

There is a need for a wider range of subjects to be covered. These subjects should include areas such as health, violence, the sharing of power in society, and sharing of income and wealth within households. This implies the creation of indicators for key population sub-groups, such as older persons and ethnic groups, as well as greater attention to diversity among men and among women.

Furthermore, the analysis of patterns shown in the gender equality indicators needs to be done in specific regions. Caution is needed in generalizing to the situations of rural and ‘periphery’ communities from data that are dominated by urban populations. Both the questions asked in gathering data, and the analyses eventually done with the data, need to be sensitive to the special situations of these smaller communities. When developing data bases and gender equality indicators for use in analysis, it is necessary to present data for different kinds of community in ways that reflect the social contexts of each kind, paying attention to variations in subjective as well as objective variables and in cultural diversity.

*Case Studies of the Gender Equality Indicators and Other Gender-Related Data Are Needed*

A case study book on the *uses* of gender equality indicators and other gender-related data would illustrate how people have used such data. This would help others improve their effectiveness in the applications of the data. The case study book could be supported by a research guide that is gender sensitive, and deals with the nuances of gender-based analysis that goes beyond simply breaking down the data by sex.

### *Recommendations to Statistics Canada*

Statistics Canada should include NGOs in its data liberation initiative. This will help the non-governmental sector to become more well informed users of data and to play a more prominent role in interpreting findings.

With the goal of facilitating improved access to the data and related information concerning the equality of the sexes for the purposes of research and participation in the policy process, Statistics Canada should take measures to further democratize access to data, and to reduce the cost of access to its data banks. This would be done in collaboration with its partners in the collection and dissemination of data.

These measures should be informed by consultations involving diverse groups, including women's organizations and aboriginal groups, to improve its understanding of the needs of these groups for information that is relevant to gender-based analysis. Results of these consultations should be published.

In the process of improving the accessibility of data to various user groups, Statistics Canada should allow each group to decide what level of data reliability is acceptable for its purposes.

## **Building Alliances to Improve Effectiveness**

### *Partnering Elected Officials and Researchers*

Improvement is needed in alliances that are important for advancing the use of gender-based analysis; for example alliances among elected officials and researchers.

### *Partnering with Policy Analysts*

In attempting to increase the gender sensitivity of policy analysts, focus should be placed upon working along with them in specific projects. This includes involving the analysts in the creation of tools for gender-based analysis, rather than first developing the tools and then trying to issue prescriptions concerning their use. The tools in question include methodological ones as well as training tools. This approach of emphasizing partnerships with policy analysts early in the creation of tools will increase the chances that the positive values of gender-based analysis will be perceived and pursued by those analysts.

### *Partnering with Non-Government Organizations*

Non-government organizations are important foundations of a viable civil society. They need resources to allow them to continue their work. We recognize and support the critical role of non government organizations and other interested parties in the utilization and dissemination of gender-based analysis

There is a large reserve of relevant knowledge and experience in non-government organizations. There is a need to evolve mechanisms for periodic consultations with them in order to allow them to use that knowledge and experience to influence decisions that affect large numbers of Canadians and the well being of Canadian communities. The quality of their inputs to these consultative processes will be enriched to a worthwhile degree if systematic steps are taken to build up their capacity to access and use statistical information.

Toward this end, core funding for women's groups needs to be maintained, since the groups cannot function without it. The knowledge that is available from these groups cannot be brought to bear in the development of policies designed to solve problems unless this support is maintained.

#### *Recommendation to Statistics Canada*

The work of Statistics Canada should accord greater priority to the information needs of non-government organizations.

### **Multi-Sector Partnering Including Community-Based Groups**

Networks need to be built across all relevant Ministries, and there is a need to strengthen links among policy-makers, data collectors, academics and community-based groups. Strengthened links will improve activists' understanding of the policy process, so as to increase the effectiveness of inter-group co-operation.

Partnerships with community leaders can be important in stimulating use of information about gender equality. Effective partnerships are those that are nurtured early in the process of developing indicator projects.

### *Recommendations to Statistics Canada and Status of Women Canada*

Given the interest that is stimulated by the availability, usage and promotion of gender-based analysis, as well as the desire to obtain and share related statistical data, and experience across many sectors, it is proposed that Status of Women Canada and Statistics Canada form an ad hoc working group comprised of persons present at the symposium. This ad hoc working group will deliberate to develop a plan of action designed to assure concrete results from the symposium with the goal of facilitating the exchange of information, expertise and resources among non-government organizations, government officials, and politicians. This group will also work towards the goal of circulating information about best practices, to promote the emergence of appropriate strategies, and to raise the awareness of gender issues among bureaucrats, politicians and the public with due attention to the implied funding requirements.

The ad hoc group should also contribute toward developing an accountability framework on gender-based analysis for use in departments.

### **Enhancing the Capacity to Produce Policy-Relevant Information Based on Statistics**

Qualitative data are needed to complement and balance the current heavy reliance on quantitative data. For example, valuable insights could be obtained by complementing the General Social Surveys with in-depth interviews of a subset of the respondents.

The development of social indicators would be enhanced by the use of specific tools for incorporating qualitative information, utilizing feedback from people being measured, and validating the indicators. These tools would facilitate meeting such challenges that of representing accurately the realities of women facing violence and insecurity. The gathering of such data may mean supplementing surveys with additional methods of gathering data.

An effort should be made to develop a formulation of a prototype federal budget that incorporates gender-sensitivity in the development process. Even a crude effort might serve to stimulate the process of improving gender-sensitivity in official budgets.

## Revealing the Paradigms and Models Implicit in Social and Economic Indicators

The configuration of institutions and how they behave is important, and models differ in their orientation toward the reflection of institutional behaviors.

Current projects of indicator development tend to be dominated by the values of the market system, which emphasize transactions in marketable resources rather than on those that deal with relationships. Consequently, these projects tend to exclude concern with gender-related issues and with women's realities.

### Training of Data Users

Training of providers and users of data is important. Politicians and senior policy advisors, in particular, need training about gender sensitivity, the uses of gender indicators and gender-based analysis. This training is needed if gender-based analysis is to become integrated into decision-making within government.

The efforts of Statistics Sweden to provide senior elected officials with training in gender-sensitivity and use of related statistics were noted with approval.

Efforts are needed to build the media's awareness of the gender dimension of policies and programs. Supplying the media with 'report cards' on relevant aspects of government performance is one way of building that awareness.