



Joint message from the United Nations Resident Coordinator, UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF Representatives, and the Ambassadors of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Norway, Spain and Sweden on International Women’s Day

8th March 2022

Ensuring Women and Girls Count for Generation Equality

According to the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report of 2021, it will take at least another 135 years for the world to achieve gender parity. At this rate, no one alive today is likely to see a world where gender equality is realized. The good news is that some countries will get there faster through committed leadership, investment and public policy.

International Women’s Day, celebrated on the 8th of March every year is an opportunity for us to reflect on the efforts that have been made thus far, and what more needs to be done to accelerate progress towards a more gender-equal world.

There have been some positive gains for women and girls in recent decades, yet today, women still experience numerous challenges. Women are still more likely to be poor than men, experience high rates of violence and abuse, and carry the greater burden of unpaid care work in the home. They continue to be underrepresented in leadership and decision-making, as well as science and technology fields, with persistent gender biases serving as barriers to women’s progress. Women living with disabilities are especially vulnerable, face even more forms of discrimination, and are further left behind.

Tanzania’s theme for International Women’s Day this year is “Generation Equality for Sustainable Development: Let’s participate in the forthcoming census”. This is an important and timely reminder that women and girls need to be counted and visible in the census. We need to understand their potential and their realities to inform national planning, and specifically to

implement Tanzania's Generation Equality Forum commitments to promote women's economic justice and rights. In short, Tanzania needs solid data and evidence on women and girls in order to deliver on its commitment to achieve gender equality by 2030.

In a country where women and girls make up the majority of the country's workforce, it is imperative to collect and analyze comprehensive data on women and girls. This data will help to shape gender-responsive policies, laws, plans, programmes and budgets to uplift women and girls across the country.

Population censuses provide official data on how many people live in a country, where they live, the breakdown of age and sex, as well as key social and economic characteristics of the population. Various fundamental assistance programs that support improved protection, education, health and economic security outcomes for women and girls rely on census data to inform them. Census data also aids the country in understanding the different needs and characteristics of the nation. It is vital that everyone, especially women and girls, take part to determine where to focus development efforts.

To ensure that the census is as inclusive as possible, and delivers the gender data that is needed, both women and men, girls and boys need to understand why it is important. This includes adolescent girls. As adolescence is a tipping point in a girl's life, this data will help ensure they can access the right resources and opportunities so that the girls of today can become the leaders, entrepreneurs, and change makers of tomorrow.

It is also critical to identify and address existing gender biases in data collection. Women and girls who work outside the market economy have historically been invisible in official statistics due to discriminatory social and cultural norms and attitudes. These biases need to be tackled head-on to ensure that the census takes into account women and girls' contributions to their families' livelihoods and the economy, and that this data reflects their lived realities.

Focusing on the census this International Women's Day further demonstrates the government's commitment and resolve to ensure that the census is gender-responsive, and to improve the production and use of gender statistics more broadly.

The government has also made commendable progress in recent years in making gender data more available and accessible, which has translated into a number of important publications

including the *Social Institution and Gender Index (SIGI) Tanzania*, which provides evidence on how discriminatory social norms and practices continue to limit women's and girls' access to opportunities and rights.

Generation Equality envisions a world where all people have equal rights and opportunities. Where there is equality in political leadership, classrooms, corporate boardrooms, and farm fields. Where women and girls, including those with disabilities, are safe and have equal access to economic opportunities. On this International Women's Day, let us ensure that we enhance our collective efforts to make that vision a reality. Keeping all women and girls visible in national data sources can propel us in the right direction.

We are proud to be accompanying Tanzania on its journey towards gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment. A journey that, with good data to guide our choices, does not need to last 135 years.