



Milestones

By **Ramya Rajagopalan**
(icsf@icsf.net),
Consultant, ICSF

UN agrees on ground-breaking gender indicators

Data collection on social and economic development has come a long way, particularly since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet much remains to be done in the area of gender statistics. For example, only 41 per cent of States regularly measure violence against women. Very little of this data can be compared between countries because of differences in measurement.

This situation is set to change with the development of new gender indicators agreed by the UN Statistical Commission as a guide for national and international data compilation. They include a new set of nine indicators specifically designed to measure physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence against women, plus a separate minimum set of 52 gender indicators developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics.

The minimum set covers economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources, education, health and related services, public life and decisionmaking, and human rights of women and girls—all highlighted in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. They will measure economic factors such as gender gap in wages, access to credit, average hours spent on unpaid domestic work, and ownership of productive assets. Other

measures include enrollment rates in education, the maternal mortality ratio, adolescent fertility rates and child marriage.

The impetus to develop a specific set of indicators to measure violence against women dates back to a 2006 resolution of the UN General Assembly. It is one of five key outcomes of the Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign, launched in 2008. The conclusions of the 57th Commission on the Status of Women in March 2013 also called for improved statistics.

The gender indicators are a testimony to the increased recognition of the importance of gender statistics in policymaking. As the MDGs have shown, adequate statistics are critical for monitoring international agreements. With the MDGs' 2015 deadline approaching, it has become pressing to get adequate indicators and baselines for future monitoring.

This was echoed by the global inequality consultations—conducted in 2012-13 and co-hosted by UN Women and UNICEF—which concluded that a new Post-2015 Development Agenda should “include not only a universal goal for gender equality...but also ensure that gender and other dominant inequalities are mainstreamed through disaggregated targets and indicators.” 