

## Monitoring women's representation in local government

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The methodology of SDG indicator 5.5.1b  
“proportion of seats held by women in local government”

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### Outline

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Section 1. Why women's representation in local government matters

Section 2. Background of SDG indicator 5.5.1b

Section 3. What is local government and how is it organized

Section 4. Sources of data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b

Section 5. Reporting data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## Section 1

### Why women's representation in local government matters

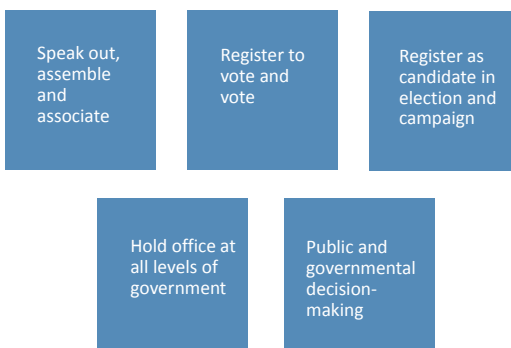
#### Key points

- Women's political participation is a human right
- Yet women remain under-represented in governmental bodies and leadership positions
- Persistent challenges affect women's political participation
- Addressing challenges of women's political participation
- Women's positive impact on governance



## Women's political participation is a human right

### Forms of political participation



### Normative framework for women's political participation: KEY MILESTONES

- 1995: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
- 1979: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- 1966: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- 1952: Convention on the Political Rights of Women
- 1948: Universal Declaration of Human Rights



## Women are under-represented in governmental bodies and leadership positions

- **23.3%** of all national parliamentarians today (both houses combined)
- **7.9%** of heads of state
- **4.7%** of heads of government
- **18.3%** of all ministers

Sources: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Women in National Parliaments, situation as at 1 March 2017; UN Women calculation based on information provided by Permanent Missions to the United Nations, as at 1 April 2017; UN Women-IPU Map of Women in Politics: 2017.



Section 1. Why women's representation in local government matters

## Challenges affecting women's political participation



- Stereotyping gender roles and views of women as unqualified for political office;
- Restricted mobility and household duties lowering women's ability to campaign and attend political meetings;
- Lack of financial resources, and economic independence necessary to pursue public office;
- Fewer family and business connections;
- Lack of support by political parties resulting in few women nominated as electoral candidates;
- Women are less often sitting incumbents;
- Violence against women in elections and politics;
- Biased and unequal media coverage.



Section 1. Why women's representation in local government matters

## Addressing challenges of women's political participation

### Examples of measures taken by states

- **Constitutional reforms** to enshrine gender equality, remove discriminatory provisions, include non-discriminatory clauses, and provide foundation for promoting women's political participation (i.e. principle of parity, temporary special measures (TSMs));
- **Electoral reforms** supporting inclusive electoral processes and electoral quotas;
- **Political finance reforms** to level the playing field for women, for example, on public financing of political parties, spending and contribution limits;
- **TSMs**, including legislative, executive or administrative instruments supporting allocation of resources, preferential treatment, targeted recruitment and promotion, numerical goals connected with time frames and quota systems.

### Other measures by multiple stakeholders

- **Measures taken by political parties:** finance measures, voluntary adoption of quotas on party candidate lists and in the party's leadership structure; gender equality and non-discrimination clauses in party manifestos and constitutions;
- **Measures to address violence against women:** investigation of allegations of violence and prosecution, public awareness campaigns;
- **Measures to promote a conducive environment:** peer support and capacity development for new office holders; promoting networking for women candidates; training for political parties to strengthen gender equality capacities; training aspiring women candidates for political office; voluntary codes for media outlets with guidelines on how to respect the image of women in media.

Source: United Nations General Assembly, 2013. Measures taken and progress achieved in the promotion of women and political participation. Report of the Secretary-General at the Sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. A/68/184. 24 July 2013.



Section 1. Why women's representation in local government matters

## Some positive benefits of women's representation in politics

- Diversity in expertise and knowledge;
- Better policies in areas relevant to women;
- Serving as positive role models for more women in politics;
- Impact on the operation of politics (timetables, locations, childcare provisions, restrooms, working hours etc.)

Source: UN Women, 2012. Why do we need more women in politics?



Section 1. Why women's representation in local government matters

## Section 2

### Background of SDG indicator 5.5.1b, “proportion of seats held by women in local government”

#### Key points

- The place of indicator 5.5.1b in the SDG monitoring framework
- How the indicators’ methodology was developed
- The scope of indicator 5.5.1b
  
- Exercise: Is indicator 5.5.1b sufficient to monitor women’s political participation at local level?



## The place of indicator 5.5.1b in the SDG monitoring framework



#### The SDG monitoring framework:

- 17 goals
- 232 unique indicators
- 54 gender-specific indicators.

#### SDG 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”

**Target 5.5:** “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.”

**Indicator 5.5.1:** Measures women’s proportional representation in two distinct areas of government: (a) national parliaments (**Tier I Indicator**) and (b) local government (**Tier II Indicator**)

- **Indicator 5.5.1b:** formulated as “Proportion of seats held by women in local governments”;
- Mirrors indicator 5.5.1a on women’s representation in parliament;
- Measured as the **proportion of elected seats held by women in deliberative bodies of local government.**



## Some terms related to SDG indicators

SDG custodian agency, Tier classification, Metadata of an indicator, Statistical international standards

**SDG custodian agency:** International agencies with the role to compile data of a given indicator, support adoption and compliance with internationally agreed standards, strengthen national statistical systems, and calculate regional and global aggregates for the given indicator.

**Tier classification for SDG indicators:** To facilitate the implementation of the global indicator framework, SDG indicators are classified by the IAEG-SDGs into three tiers on the basis of their level of methodological development and the availability of data at the global level, as follows:

- **Tier 1:** Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.
- **Tier 2:** Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.
- **Tier 3:** No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested.

**Metadata of an indicator:** Information that defines and describes data of an indicator. The metadata of SDG indicators is a short technical methodological note that contains information on: definitions, rationale of the indicator, data sources, computation method, and data compilation actors and schedule. Metadata for indicator 5.5.1b is available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-05-01b.pdf>

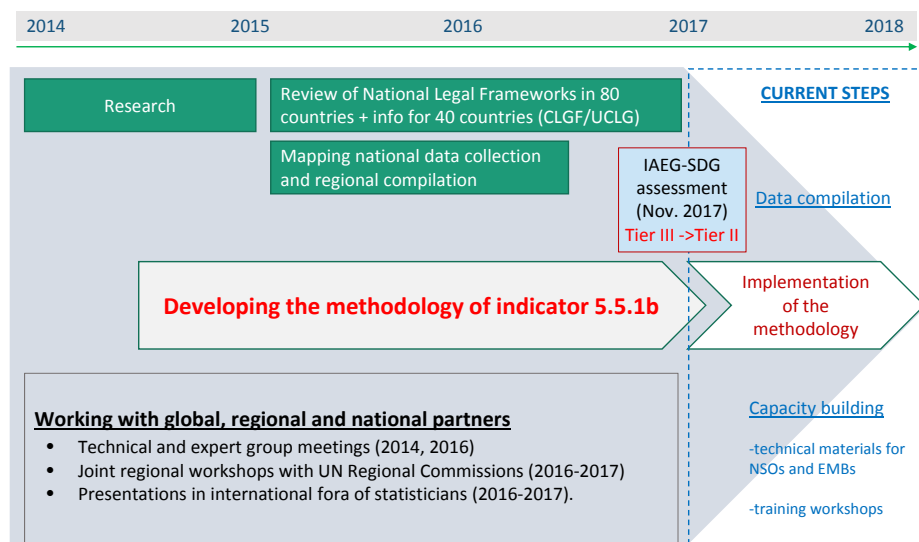
**Statistical international standards:** definitions, classifications, and data collection methods agreed-upon at international level with the role of ensuring comparability of data across countries and data quality.

Source: Unite Nations, 2018. Sustainable Development Goal indicators website: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>



Section 2. Background of SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## Steps undertaken by UN Women to develop the methodology of the indicator



Section 2. Background of SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## Quick review of the methodological progress

### Tier III SDG Indicator 5.5.1b (2015)

#### No global indicator and data compilation

#### Regional data compilation, BUT:

- Slight variation in indicators used
- Some not official statistics
- Missing detailed metadata

#### Common features across regions:

- Separate indicators for deliberative and executive bodies
- Focus on elected positions

#### Differences across regions:

- Single or lower tier of local government in LAC and Europe
- All tiers of local government in Asia and the Pacific

Existing statistical standards beyond the scope of the indicator (i.e. definition of local government based on 2008 SNA; UN Handbook *Using Administrative and Secondary Sources for Official Statistics*).

### METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

### Tier II SDG Indicator 5.5.1b (2018)

#### One common indicator: “proportion of elected seats in deliberative bodies of local government”

Local government defined by 2008 SNA and identified based on national legal frameworks (constitutions + local government legislations)

#### Metadata of the indicator + Detailed Methodological Note, including information on:

- Terms and definitions
- Sources of data
- Mechanism for global reporting



Section 2. Background of SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## The scope of SDG indicator 5.5.1b:

“proportion of elected seats in deliberative bodies of local government”

### Elected positions

- Most positions in local government
- Captures political participation and accountability to citizens
- Increases comparability across countries on political participation dimension
- Low cost data sources (administrative data supplied by Electoral Management Bodies)

### Members of deliberative bodies

- Mirrors existing separate indicators at national level (women in parliament vs. women in ministerial positions) -> increased comparability across countries
- Covers the great majority of local government members, making visible millions of women and men with decision-making power at local level

**All tiers of local government** as specified by national legal frameworks (Constitutions + Local Government Acts or equivalent)



Section 2. Background of SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## Exercise: Is indicator 5.51b sufficient to monitor women's political participation at local level?

### The task

Recall there are different aspects of political participation (Module 1) and note that indicator 5.5.1b refers only to women's representation in deliberative bodies of local government.

Are there other aspects of women's political participation at local level that would be beneficial to monitor using statistical indicators?



## Beyond the SDG indicator: statistics, indicators and other evidence for national monitoring and policy-making

### Distinction between:

- Indicators for global monitoring (standardized, to ensure comparability across countries): SDG indicators + other statistics and indicators compiled by international agencies; and
- Indicators for national monitoring – contextualized for country policy needs and resources available

### Additional data/evidence for national monitoring and policy-making:

- Data on SDG 5.5.1b further disaggregated by tiers and types of local government, urban/rural areas, individual characteristics of elected officials (sex, age, education, disability status);
- Data on women's participation in electoral processes as electoral staff, voters, and candidates in local election (supplied by EMBs)
- Data and qualitative evidence on the participation of elected women once in the office; attitudes and values towards women in politics; other obstacles preventing women's political participation.





## Section 3

What is local government and how is it organized

### Key points

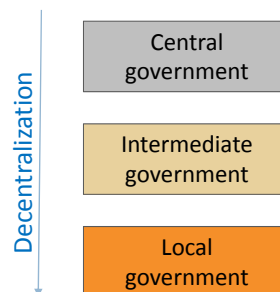
- Sub-national spheres of government
- Local government
- Local government tiers, types, and units
- The composition of local government units
- Administrative tiers of government
- How local government members are selected
  
- Exercise: Local government versus local governance



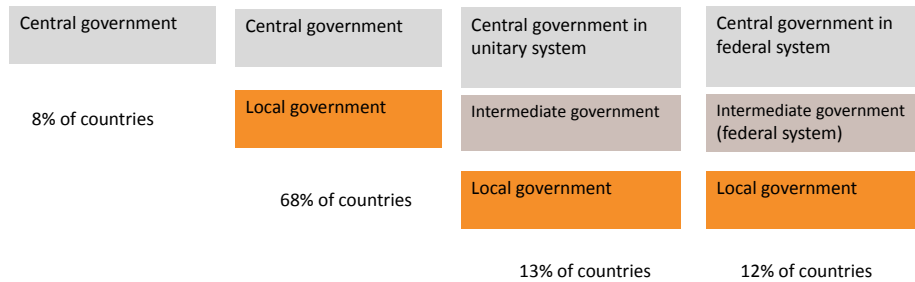
## Sub-national spheres of government

Sub-national spheres of government are the result of **decentralization** = the process of transferring some **legislative, executive, financial and administrative** powers from the central government to sub-national units of government distributed across the territory of a country.

### Three spheres of government



## Distribution of countries by spheres of government



Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization. Based on 120 countries.



Section 3. What is local government

## Local government

*In principle:* 2008 SNA (System of National Accounts) distinction between central, state and local government (para 4.129). Local government consists of local government units, defined by SNA as “institutional units whose fiscal, legislative and executive authority extends over the smallest geographical areas distinguished for administrative and political purposes” (para 4.145).

- *In a given country:* **identification of local government based on national legal framework**, including national constitutions and local government acts or equivalent legislation.



Section 3. What is local government

## Common elements of local government definitions across countries

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- **National legal framework** provides for the existence of/regulates local government
- A formal institutional organization of local governments, consisting of **deliberative and executive bodies**.
- The principle of self-government and the associated **political, administrative, and financial authority over some local matters within the limits of the law**;
- The sphere of local government is closest to the **people mandated to serve**.

Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



Section 3. What is local government

## Local government tiers

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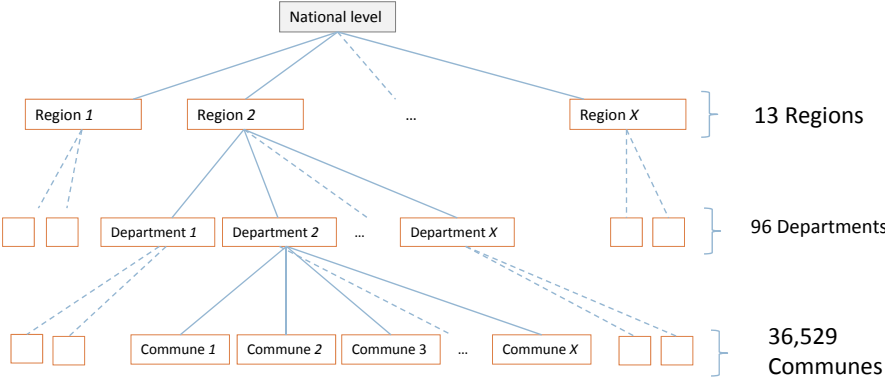
Local government may be organized in 1 or more tiers/levels.

**Local government tiers are** *political-administrative levels of a territorial division of country* (such as municipalities, districts, regions, etc.) with the legislative, executive and financial authority to make binding decisions in some local policy areas.



Section 3. What is local government

Example of a territorial division of a country (France) by political-administrative levels



Examples of countries with 3, 2, and 1 local government tiers

France

State structure: Unitary



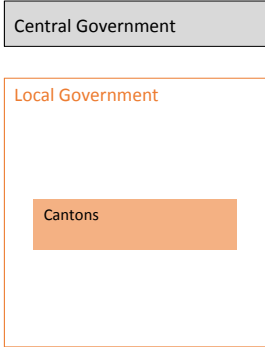
Norway

State structure: Unitary



Costa Rica

State structure: Unitary



Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



## Distribution of countries by number of tiers of local government (based on 120 countries)

	Number of countries	Percentage distribution
Countries with local government	111	100 %
Countries with 1 tier	53	48 %
Countries with 2 tiers	38	34 %
Countries with 3 tiers	17	15 %
Countries with 4 tiers	3	3 %

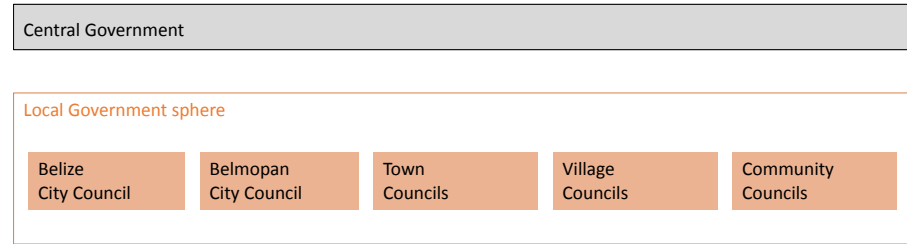
Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization. Based on 120 countries overall, of which 111 have a local government sphere.

## Different types of local government at the same tier

- A local government tier (level) may have one or more *types of local government*.
- The types of local governments typically reflect slight differences in the size or responsibilities of local governments within tiers of a country, due to:
  - (a) differences in the size of localities or areas they are mandated to serve; and/or
  - (b) an asymmetrical set-up of the local government.

## Belize

State structure: *Unitary*

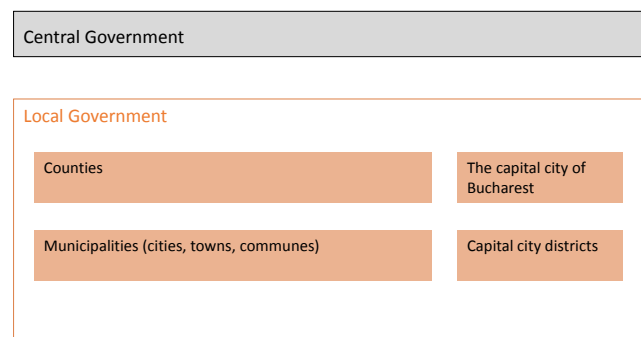


Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



## Romania

State structure: *Unitary*



Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



## Asymmetric institutional set up

Refers to the variation of the number of local government tiers within a country

The number of local government tiers may differ between:

- Rural versus urban areas
- Densely populated areas of metropolises versus low-density areas
- The different states or provinces of the same country.

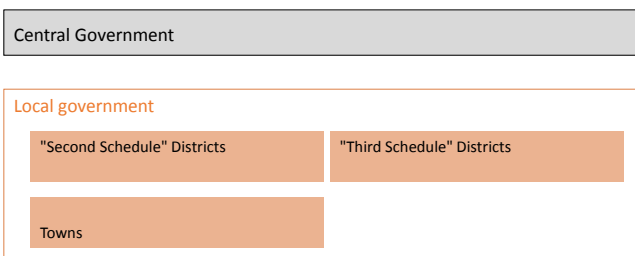
22% countries with local government have an inconsistent number of tiers throughout the country.

Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization. Based on 120 countries.



### Bahamas

State structure: *Unitary*



Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



## India

State structure: *Federation*

Central Government

### Intermediate sphere of government

24 States and 2  
Union territories

3 States and 2  
Union territories

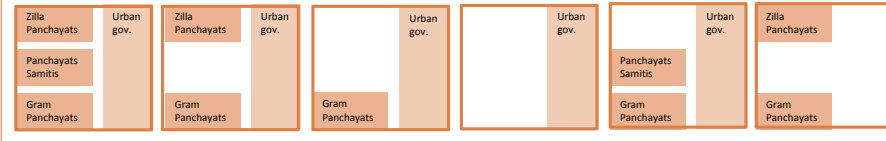
2 States

1 State and 1  
Union territory

1 Union territory

1 Union territory

### Local Government



Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



Section 3. What is local government

## United States of America

State structure: *Federal system*

Central Government

States

States

States

States

States

### Local government

County

City-county

Municipalities

### Local government

County

Municipalities

Town or townships

### Local government

County

Municipalities

### Local government

Municipalities

Town or townships

### Local government

Municipalities

Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



Section 3. What is local government



## Local government units

Each tier and type of local government has one or more **local government units**. A local government unit includes:

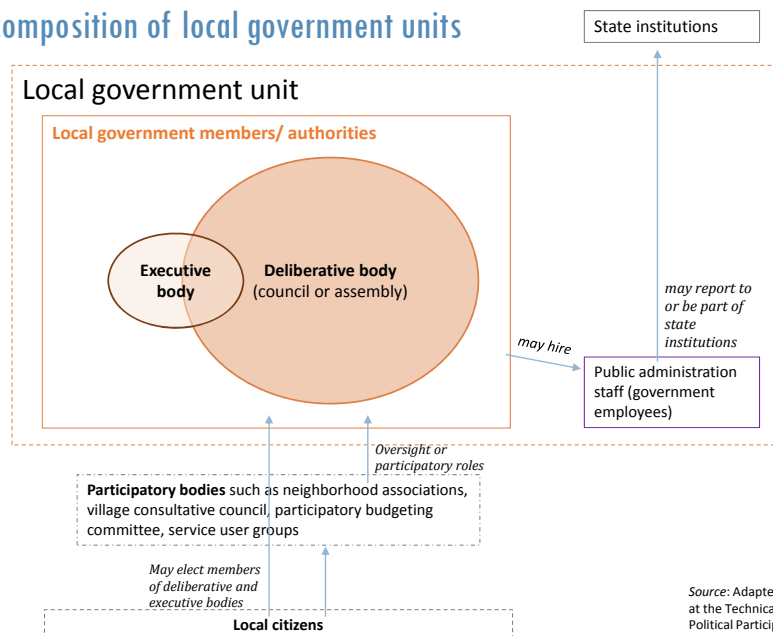
- (1) a *deliberative body* (council/ assembly), usually elected by universal suffrage, that has decision-making power, including the ability to issue by-laws, on a range of local aspects of public affairs;
- (2) an *executive body*, elected, appointed or nominated, such as an executive committee or a mayor that prepares and executes decisions made by the deliberative body.

The members of these two bodies are referred to as **local government authorities/members**.

A distinct category from local government authorities is the *public administration staff*. Public administration staff are government employees that support the implementation of the local decisions and the provision of government services at the local level.



## The composition of local government units



Source: Adapted from concepts discussed at the Technical Meeting on Women's Political Participation at the Local Level, UN Women, New York, 24-25 November 2014.



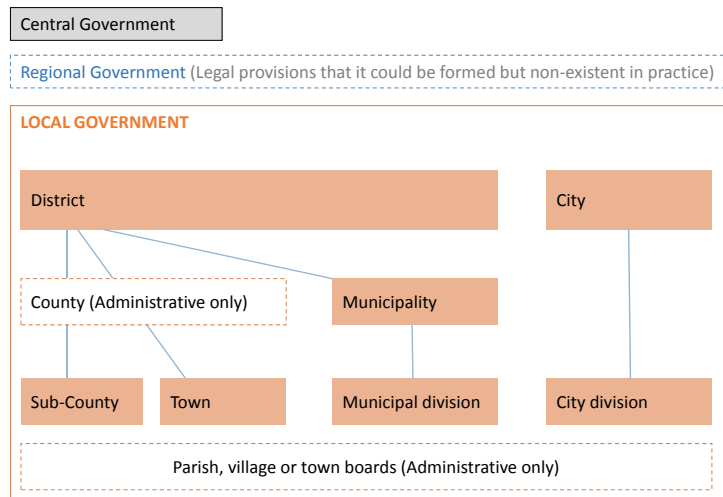
## Administrative tiers of government

- In addition to tiers of local government with political, administrative, and financial authority, countries may have **additional administrative tiers, or participatory/auxiliary bodies**.
- These tiers **lack deliberative and/or executive power**; however, they may support the implementation of state or local policies and regulations and/or participate in an advisory capacity.
- Some country constitutions or local government acts emphasize the distinction between local government units and other administrative units or participatory/auxiliary bodies.



### UGANDA

State structure: *Unitary*



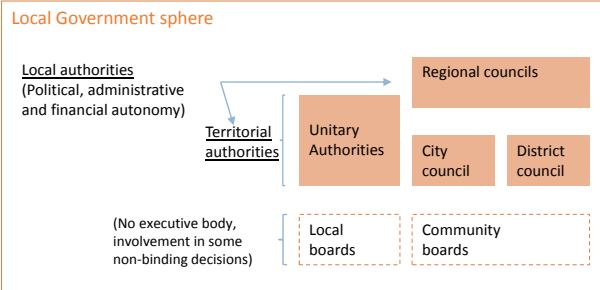
Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



## New Zealand

State structure: *Unitary*

Central Government



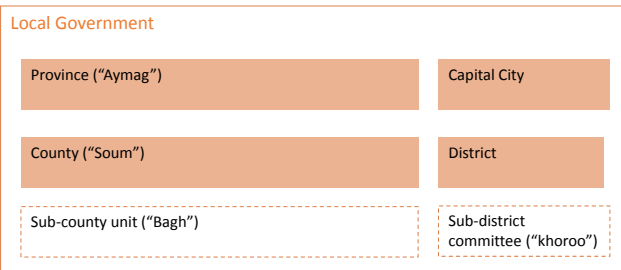
Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



## Mongolia

State structure: *Unitary*

Central Government



Source: UN Women Review of Local Government Organization.



## How local government members are selected

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Members of deliberative and executive bodies of local government may be selected based on three methods:

1. **Direct elections**, by voters casting their ballots in local elections;
2. **Indirect elections**: members of local councils/deliberative bodies elected by citizen elect, (a) from among themselves, or (b) candidates, one or more persons in the leadership positions or for the higher local government tier;
3. **Appointments/nominations**, typically by government officials from higher-ranking tiers of government.

The indicator 5.5.1b covers only elected positions in the local councils or equivalent deliberative bodies of local government. However, note that elected positions account for most of the positions at this level:

- In 84% of countries, all members of local councils/deliberative bodies of local government are elected
- In the remaining countries (16%), the majority of members are elected.

## Do you know how local government looks like in your country?

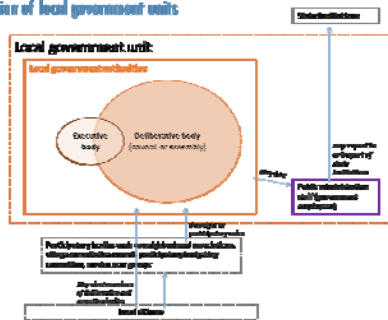
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## Exercise: Local government versus local governance

### The task

The distinction between local government and local governance

#### The composition of local government units



- Local governance is a broader concept than local government.
- **Government**, in general, refers to the **formal organization of public authorities** responsible for governing a society.
- By comparison, **local governance** refers to a wider process in which **various actors in the public and private sectors as well as civil society** at the local, national and international levels play different roles...in satisfying the interests and needs of the local community. (UNDP; UNPAN)

## Section 4

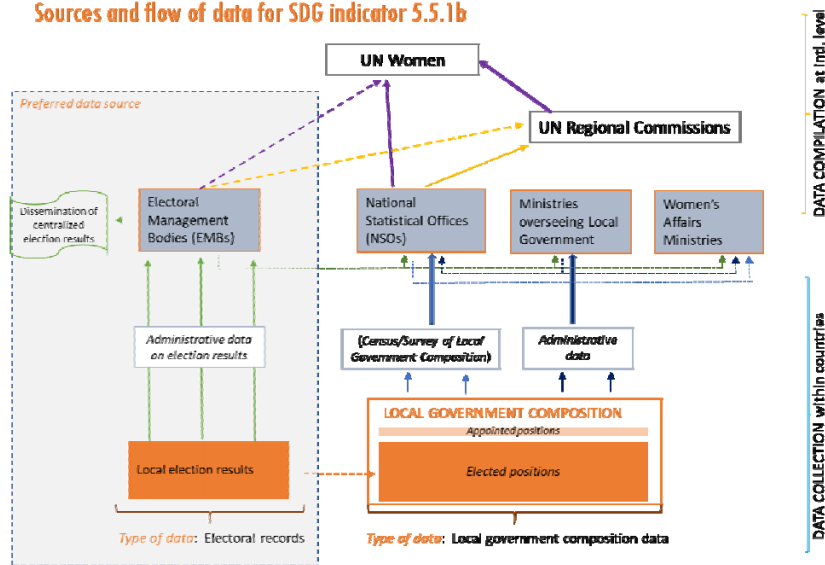
### Sources of data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b

#### Key points

- Sources and flow of official data and statistics on women's representation in local government
- Administrative data based on electoral records as preferred source for SDG indicator 5.5.1b
- Alternative sources: public administration data and surveys/censuses of local governments
- Role of national stakeholders in producing/using data on SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## Sources and flow of official data and statistics on women's representation in local government

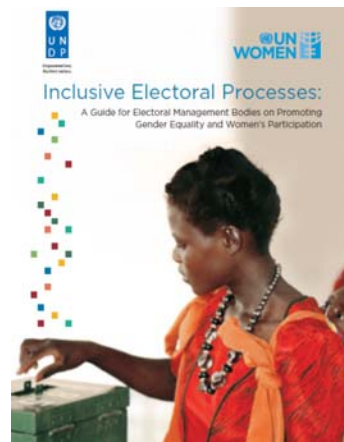
### Sources and flow of data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b



Section 4. Sources of data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) are a key source of data disaggregated by sex

- The collection and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex is an essential task for an inclusive EMB
- EMBs are well-placed to ensure that the information they collect has integrated the variable "gender/sex", including in:
  - Voter registration
  - Voter turnout
  - Electoral officials
  - Candidacies in local elections
  - Seats won
- EMBs are a low-cost source of data on women in elected positions at national and local level, including for indicators 5.5.1a and 5.5.1b
- However, in some countries:
  - Collection of data disaggregated by sex and/or dissemination not yet mandated or institutionalized
  - Centralization of data difficult in some countries -> incomplete coverage, poor reporting, coverage biases.
  - Records not maintained electronically.



UN WOMEN  
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Section 4. Sources of data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## When EMB data not available, two alternative sources

### Public administration data

Data available to line ministries overseeing local government.

However, some limitations:

- scope of public administration records broader than local government and elected positions -> additional data processing required to extract only the needed information
- elected positions may not be covered if administrative records are restricted to positions on the government payroll.

### Surveys/censuses of local government units

Surveys or censuses using local government units as units of observation may be undertaken by NSOs and/or line ministries.

Types: (a) local government censuses or surveys; (b) establishment survey; and (c) municipality surveys.

Possible limitations:

- questions on number of members of local government by sex not yet integrated.
- like other censuses and surveys, a low response rate and sampling errors can result in bias of the statistics obtained.



Section 4. Sources of data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b

## Section 5

### Reporting data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b

#### Key points

- Global reporting of SDG indicator 5.5.1b
- Data request form
- Indicator's formula
- Computation of the indicator



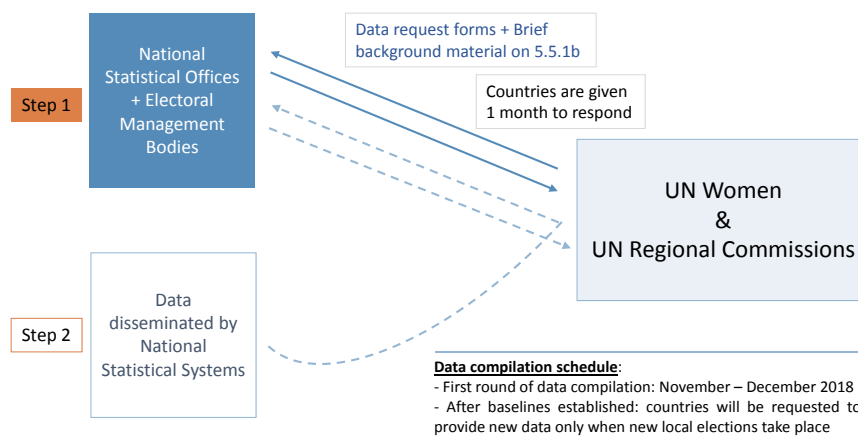
## First global data compilation: what and how?

- The indicator is measured as “proportion of elected positions held by women in deliberative bodies of local government”:

$$= \frac{\text{Elected positions held by women in deliberative bodies of local government}}{\text{Elected positions held by women and men in deliberative bodies of local government}} \times 100$$

- Data requirements:
  - Number of elected positions held by women and men in deliberative bodies of local government
  - EMBs as preferred source of data
  - Reference time: most recent local elections
- Customized data request forms for about half of countries in the world
- Data requested disaggregated by tiers

## Data reporting mechanism for SDG indicator 5.5.1b





## Data request forms

Two types of data request forms:

- Customized data request forms for 125 countries for which UN Women has developed local government profiles;
- Generic data request forms for the remaining countries.

### Customized data request form

- Introductory section: what the form is about, who should complete it;
- Contact info for person completing the form;
- A description of local government organization in that country;
- Customized data table on number of women and men in elected positions in deliberative bodies of local government disaggregated by tier.

### Generic data request form

- Introductory section: what the form is about, who should complete it;
- Contact info for person completing the form;
- Data table on number of women and men in elected positions in deliberative bodies of local government disaggregated by tier.

## Customized data request form - excerpt

Section on local government organization

Customized data table

### Section B. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

A review of the national legal framework indicates the following organization of local government in Denmark:

Central government

#### Local government tiers

Regions

Municipalities

The national legal framework on local government reviewed includes:

- Constitution of Denmark (1953)
- Law on Regions (2005, amended 2016)
- Municipality Law (2018)
- Elections Act (1989, consolidated 2014)

### 1. Number of elected positions held by women and men in deliberative bodies of local government, by tier/type of local government, at the time of most recent local elections: Denmark

Deliberative bodies of local government	Number of <u>elected</u> positions	Source of data	Reference date (month/year)	Scheduled date for next elections (month/year)
		a. Election results from Electoral Management Bodies b. Public administration data from line ministries c. Surveys/censuses of local government units (please indicate exact name)		
<b>a. Regional councils</b>				
Women				
Men				
Total				
<b>b. Municipal councils</b>				
Women				
Men				
Total				
<b>c. Total positions (=a+b)</b>				
Women				
Men				
Total				

## Data table in the generic data request form

1. Number of elected positions held by women and men in deliberative bodies of local government, by tier/type of local government, at the time of most recent local elections

Deliberative bodies of local government	Number of elected positions	Source of data		
		a. Election results from Electoral Management Bodies	b. Public administration data from line ministries	c. Surveys/questionnaires of local government units (please indicate exact name)
		Reference date (month/year)	Scheduled date for next elections (month/year)	
<b>Tier (level) of local government (please specify):</b>				
Women				
Men				
Total				
<b>Tier (level) of local government (please specify):</b>				
Women				
Men				
Total				
<b>Tier (level) of local government (please specify):</b>				
Women				
Men				
Total				
<b>Total (all tiers added)</b>				
Women				
Men				
Total				

## Calculation of the indicator

- The indicator:

$$= \frac{\text{Number of positions held by women}}{\text{Total number of positions held by women and men}} \times 100$$

- Calculated as:

$$= \frac{\text{Sum of elected positions held by women in deliberative bodies of local government}}{\text{Sum of elected positions held by women and men in deliberative bodies of local government}} \times 100$$

An example of a country with two tiers:

- Upper tier: 10 women in elected positions out of 100 total women and men in elected positions
- Lower tier: 500 women in elected positions out of 2000 total women and men in elected positions

Indicator calculated as:

$$= \frac{10 + 500}{100 + 2000} \times 100 = 24\%$$

## Group exercise:

Improving the availability and use of data on SDG indicator 5.5.1b and women's political participation at local level

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### The task

Come up with key steps in improving the availability and use of data on SDG indicator 5.5.1b and women's political participation at local level.