

Measuring Peace, Justice and Inclusion

UNDP Oslo Governance Centre – SDG 16 Policy Brief

Advancing Inclusive Decision-Making for Sustainable Development: Representation in the Public Service through SDG 16.7.1b

This brief focuses on how to promote the inclusion and participation of marginalized groups in public institutions through SDG indicator 16.7.1b that measures representation in the public service. The Covid-19 pandemic has further reinforced the need to ensure representation in public service (health, education, police, administrative personnel), not only as an end in itself but to ensure more effective delivery of services and to regenerate trust in public institutions, reaching the furthest behind first. Using data to understand better who is able to participate in decision-making processes and who is excluded is a first step in addressing some of the structural inequalities that persist across different development contexts.

Representation in public service

Promoting inclusive representation in the public service is a first step towards achieving more **participatory decision-making processes** and more **inclusive and accessible public institutions**. Recognizing that representation in the public service can reflect progress towards more inclusive and sustainable development, indicator 16.7.1b was adopted as part of the

monitoring framework of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and Member States encouraged to report on it.¹

Promoting meaningful participation of women, youth and excluded groups in decision-making processes is also critical to sustaining peace. As part of prevention and peacebuilding efforts, institutional reforms that address structural inequalities and promote inclusive governance are necessary to address factors that can fuel conflict,

such as exclusion of particular groups from decision-making processes, including participation in the public service.²

In addition, the **right to participate in public affairs** is guaranteed by multiple international normative frameworks such as Article 21 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 25 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and other international treaties focusing on the rights of particular groups (women, minorities, persons with disabilities). (See Box 1)

However, while symbolic representation can in itself have beneficial outcomes in terms of inclusion, meaningful representation in public

service must necessarily go beyond *passive representation* to *active representation*.³ More **inclusive policy outcomes are achieved through active representation** as priorities of different communities are better articulated and services are delivered in a more inclusive and responsive manner.⁴

Additionally, representation in the public service needs to be looked at from a lens of **intersectionality**, recognizing **the multiple structural barriers people face in participating in public life**, which needs to be factored into understanding why some groups (indigenous women, for example) may be less well represented in the public service than others.

Box 1. Key international standards on the right to participate in public affairs

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 2) - “Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country”.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Art. 25) – “Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions and without unreasonable restrictions ... c) to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country”.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Art. 7) – “State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: ... b) to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government”.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Art. 5) – “State parties undertake to ... guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of ... (c) Political rights, in particular the right to participate in elections-to vote and to stand for election-on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, to take part in the Government as well as in the conduct of public affairs at any level and to have equal access to public service”.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Art. 29) – “State parties shall ... promote actively an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in the conduct of public affairs, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, and encourage their participation in public affairs.”

Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (Art. 2) – “Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation”.

Understanding which population groups make up the public service (and who is excluded) is important to **understand who is influencing public decision-making and policy outcomes**, which, in turn reflects how power is being exercised.

Evidence shows that promoting representative public service can help **improve the reach and effectiveness of services for a broader population**, reaching previously excluded groups.⁵ Empirical evidence⁶ further suggests that representation of different groups in the public service can **strengthen confidence and trust in government**⁷ and increase people's **willingness to participate and contribute to policy making**. (See Box 2)

A more representative public service can:⁸

- **Increase the performance and innovation of the public service** by building on the diverse knowledge, competencies and experiences of its workforce.
- **Improve service delivery** through better understanding and addressing the needs of different groups in policy making.
- Serve as a **source of employment** for different population groups.
- Provide a channel **participate in decision-making and exercise leadership in policy making**, particularly for marginalized populations.

Measuring representation in the public service

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that **responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels** (SDG target 16.7) is necessary to achieve more peaceful, just and inclusive

Box 2. Empirical studies on the benefits of building a representative public service

Public sector

- Increasing women's participation as elected officials and in the public service at the municipal level in **Brazil** led to the adoption of more women-friendly policies and public services for women.

Police personnel

- Female victims of sex crimes in the **United States** are more willing to report those crimes to women police officers.
- Increasing the representation of ethnic minorities in the police in **England and Wales** resulted in less biased and fairer interactions with minority populations, leading to a decrease in complaints against the police.

Education personnel

- Increasing the representation of female teachers in **Ghana** is positively associated with the performance of girls on math and science exit exams.
- Having female teachers in schools in **India** led to better academic outcomes of female students.
- Increasing the proportion of minority teachers in the **United States** increased minority students' pass rates on state exams.

Front desk administrative personnel

- Gender matching between young job seekers and job counselors in **Denmark's** unemployment programme had a more successful outcome.

Healthcare personnel

- Increasing the representation of minority healthcare professionals in the **United States** has led to an increase in use of preventative health services by members of the group, contributing to a reduction in cardiovascular mortality rates for the population group.

Sources: J. A. Grissom, E. C. Kern, L. A. Rodriguez, "The Representative Bureaucracy in Education" (2015); N. M. Riccucci, G. V. Ryzin, "Representative Bureaucracy: A Lever to Enhance Social Equity, Coproduction, and Democracy" (2016); S. Park, J. Liang, "A Comparative Study of Gender Representation and Social Outcomes" (2019), Guul, T.S, *The Individual-Level Effect of Gender Matching in Representative Bureaucracy* (2018), Dhillon A., K. J. Meier, "Representative bureaucracy in challenging environments" (2020), Meier KJ, Funk KD. "Women and Public Administration in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Representation in Brazilian Local Governments" (2017); M. Alsan, O. Garrick, G. Graziani "Does Diversity Matter for Health? Experimental Evidence from Oakland" (2018)

societies. Indicator 16.7.1 aims to measure progress towards this target by examining representation of different population groups in three areas of public life: a) parliaments, b) public service and c) the judiciary. SDG 16.7.1b focuses specifically on representative and participatory decision-making in the public service. A globally accepted methodology to measure representation in the public service was adopted in March 2020, and **States are encouraged to start collecting data and reporting on this indicator in 2021.**

SDG 16.7.1b examines the extent to which women, youth, persons with disabilities and other nationally relevant population groups are represented in the public service, compared with the proportion of those groups in the general population. Specifically, the indicator measures:

- **Public service employees** - Career civil service employees (appointed/elected positions are excluded).
- **At multiple levels of government** - Government agencies at both central and sub-central level (i.e. local government units are excluded).
- **Across decision-making levels** - Across four occupational categories (from managers to clerical workers) – also called decision-making levels in the broader literature on representation.
- **On several occupational categories** – A focus on four categories of public sector employees on the frontline of service delivery, directly interacting with the general public, namely *police personnel, health personnel, education personnel* and *front desk administrative personnel* (handling services

related to social benefits, taxation, IDs and licenses). (See Box 3)

The piloting of this methodology in 13 countriesⁱ in 2018/2019 confirmed its applicability across diverse development contexts:

Box 3. Disaggregation of public service positions

SDG 16.7.1b requires public service data to be disaggregated by:

1. **Administrative level:** central and sub-central level
2. **Demographic characteristics:**
 - Sex (male; female)
 - Age group (below 35 years; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65 and above)
 - Disability status (disability; no disability)
 - Population subgroup (country-specific)
3. **Occupational categories** (based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO-08):
 - **Four occupational categories in the public service:**
 - Managers (ISCO-08 Major Group 1),
 - Professionals (ISCO-08 Major Group 2),
 - Technicians and Associate Professionals (ISCO-08 Major Group 3)
 - Clerical Support Workers (ISCO-08 Major Group 4)
 - **Four occupational categories of frontline service workers:**
 - Police personnel
 - Education personnel
 - Health personnel
 - Front desk administrative personnel (e.g. social benefits, taxation, IDs, licenses)

Source: SDG Indicators [Metadata Repository](#)

ⁱ Egypt, Fiji, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, South Africa, Tunisia.

- **National classifications of public sector employee could be easily transposed to the ISCO-based classificationⁱⁱ** used by 16.7.1b, enabling the collection of internationally comparable data.
- In addition to sex, age and disability status, **data on representation in public institutions could also be disaggregated by nationally relevant population groups** (e.g. racial or ethnic groups, sexual minorities, etc.).
- The **necessary data could be obtained from available administrative records** maintained by Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS).ⁱⁱⁱ

Collecting disaggregated data on the public service (e.g. by agency, by decision-making level, or by national population group) can be done by **combining personnel data with other administrative databases or with employee survey data**.

This data can be used not only for reporting on progress on SDG 16, but also as part of **reporting to international human rights mechanisms**, particularly on the realization of the right to participate in public life. General Recommendation No. 23 adopted by the *UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, for example, provides that states parties should include in their reporting statistical data, disaggregated by sex, showing the percentage of women relative to men who enjoy the right to participate in public life, including to hold public office and perform public functions (Article 7).⁹

ⁱⁱ The International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 (ISCO-08) provides a system for classifying and aggregating occupational information obtained by means of statistical censuses and surveys, as well as from administrative records.

ⁱⁱⁱ A Human Resource Information System (HRIS), also known as a Human Resource Management System (HRMS), is a form of software

Understanding the gaps and putting in place measures to reduce disparities between groups, for example, by promoting the active participation of women and disadvantaged groups in policy making, **can also complement or contribute to progress on several other SDG Indicators.** (See Table 1)

TABLE 1: DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS OF SDG 16.7.1B DATA TOWARDS OTHER SDG INDICATORS

OTHER RELATED SDGS	SDG 16.7.1(B) WOMEN YOUTH DISABLED		
5.5.2. WOMEN IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS	✓		
10.3.1. POPULATION HAVING FELT DISCRIMINATED/HARASSED	✓	✓	✓
8.5.1. AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS OF EMPLOYEES	✓	✓	✓
8.6.1. PROPORTION OF YOUTH NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING		✓	
8.B.1. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT		✓	
5.1.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORKS (EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION)	✓		
16.B.1. POPULATION HAVING FELT DISCRIMINATED/HARASSED	✓	✓	✓

Data availability on representation in the public service

Administrative records are the main data source for monitoring representation of relevant groups in the public service workforce.

In most countries, **these records are maintained by a public service commission or a similar entity** administering a centralized registry of public sector employees at national level. At the sub-national level, the Ministry of Local

used to facilitate the management of human resources (HR). It combines a number of necessary HR functions, such as storing employee data, managing payroll, recruitment, benefits administration, time and attendance, employee performance management, and tracking competency and training records.

Government or Ministry of Municipal Affairs, may be responsible for maintaining a similar registry.

Box 4. International databases on public service employment

Gen-PaCS Dataset (Gender Parity in the Civil Service) (partnership between UNDP and the University of Pittsburgh, Gender Inequality Research Lab) - A global dataset of publicly available statistics on gender equality in public administration in 167 countries between 1951-2020. It contains information on public administration employment and wage gaps. The dataset will be available in 2021.

ILOSTAT (ILO) - Collects statistics on labor-related topics in 150 countries. It includes statistics on all persons directly employed by the government sector and publicly owned resident enterprises. Data available since 2010.

Gender Statistics Database (EIGE) – Collects statistics on the representation of men and women in decision-making positions across various domains, including the public administration. It includes data on 27 EU member states, the UK, EEA countries and EU candidates/potential candidates. Data available since 2003.

Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators (WB) – This is a new cross-national database on public sector employment. It provides data on the general characteristics (sex, age, education, location), wages and occupation of public sector employees. Data covers 132 countries and is available since 2000.

OECD.Stat (OECD) - Disseminates statistics on the representation of women in government since 2007. It provides data across four occupational groups, part-time vs. full-time positions, and age groups. The database mostly covers OECD countries, the Western Balkans, Latin American and Southeast Asian countries.

In some settings, individual ministries and agencies maintain their own registry, such as

within the police service commissions or the Ministry of Interior, who manage centralized human resources databases on police personnel.

It should be noted that personnel data being reported on needs to be carefully handled. Access to databases that contain personal identities should be regulated by the statistical legal framework to ensure the **right to privacy and prevent the misuse of potentially sensitive data**. Data must be managed in line with the human rights-based approach to data and the fundamental principle of official statistics to uphold confidentiality and data privacy.

While some global databases compile data on the public service disaggregated by sex and age groups, **internationally comparable statistics aligned with the newly adopted methodology for SDG 16.7.1b are not yet available**. (See Box 4)

Some of the main challenges in compiling and reporting on SDG 16.7.1b includes the following:

- Data on public employees are **not always systematically collected** or collected in a manner that enables the production of statistics.
- There is **no international standard for the collection, archiving, processing, and analysis of public service data** by a human resource information system.
- **Discrepancies exist in the way each country defines the scope of its public administration**, and the degree to which it is centralized.
- **The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) has not been fully implemented globally^{iv}** and there is significant variation in the way national

^{iv} In the countries that ISCO-08 has not been implemented it is recommended to use the definitions provided by the classification to aggregate the national classification into the defined groups.

institutions classify public service positions, sometimes even in the same country.

- While a majority of countries collect data on the overall representation of women or of various age groups in the public service as a whole, further **disaggregated data by ministry or by decision-making level is often not readily available**.
- The **availability of data** on the representation of persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic or other nationally relevant population groups in the public service is limited.

Official reporting on SDG indicator 16.7.1b is expected to start from mid-2021 and will proceed in three steps:

1. **Compile disaggregated data** - National institutions will need to compile disaggregated data as requested by the 16.7.1b methodology (by administrative level, demographic characteristics, decision-making level and categories of frontline service workers).
2. **Compute proportions of different populations groups across different levels** – It will be necessary to compute proportions of women, youth, persons with a disability and nationally relevant population groups across each decision-making level in the public service (at both central and sub-central level), and across categories of frontline service workers.
3. **Generate representation ratios compared to national populations** - Countries will generate representation ratios by comparing the proportion of various demographic groups in the public service with the proportion of the same groups in the national population, across each decision-making level.

Box 5. Strengthening the production of statistics on public service in Bangladesh

The 2013 Statistics Act states that the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) shall generate, store, publish, and authenticate the quality of official statistics produced by national agencies. In 2017, Bangladesh launched the SDGs Tracker platform to monitor the implementation of SDGs. While government agencies have identified appropriate data sources for each SDG indicator, including relevant official administrative sources, BBS administers the platform and is responsible for authenticating data provided by focal points from more than 150 public agencies. Before publishing data on the platform, it is authenticated by the Technical Working Committee chaired by the Director General of BBS. To further ensure good quality, timely generation and disaggregation of data on SDG indicators, in 2020, the BBS prepared an '[Action Plan and Methodological Guidelines](#)' for SDG indicators. These guidelines are fully aligned with the SDG Indicators Metadata repository, but they also consider the national context and the specificities of the national statistical system.

For SDG 16.7.1b, these Guidelines specify data sources, relevant classifications, computation procedures, data delivery deadlines and minimum disaggregation dimensions, which include sex (female, male), disability (with a disability, without disability), religion (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, others) and national population group (ethnic, non-ethnic) variables. Besides, to ensure that key stakeholders are aware of the methodology and have the necessary skills to generate the data and to report on SDG 16.7.1b, the [BBS conducted a training for government representatives](#), with UNDP's support. The comprehensive Methodological Guidelines, coupled with the country's robust legal framework giving the BBS a strong coordinating role, and with increased capacities of key officials, have allowed Bangladesh to produce quality data fully in line with the official metadata for SDG 16.7.1b.

As a custodian agency for SDG 16.7.1b, UNDP is supporting countries in adjusting their data collection process to be able to report on this indicator. For example, **Bangladesh** has worked

extensively to align its national data collection framework with the data requirements for SDG 16.7.1b, and to increase awareness of key government stakeholders on the importance of collecting such disaggregated data. (See Box 5)

Policy implications of data on representation in the public service

This section highlights how countries can use data on the composition of the public service to promote the employment of underrepresented groups in the public administration, including in decision-making positions.

I. Women's representation

While data on women's overall representation in the public service is available, **disaggregated data on women's representation in various ministries or across decision-making levels remains scarce**. This makes it difficult to detect specific 'pockets' of female underrepresentation across the public service.

It is noteworthy that out of 47 country reports submitted to the most recent Voluntary National Reviews at the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, **only 12^v (28%) of VNRs referenced data on women's representation decision-making**. Most countries did so as part of reporting on SDG 5 (Gender Equality), which has an indicator (SDG 5.5.2) on the "proportion of women in managerial positions" across both private and public sectors, rather than specifically on female representation in the public service (SDG 16.7.1b).¹⁰

Beyond collecting sex-disaggregated data, several countries and international organizations are now experimenting with the collection of complementary data on **gender identity** – via censuses, surveys and administrative records – and developing recommendations to this end.¹¹ (See Box 6)

It can be insightful to **link data on the public service to other administrative registers** to enrich the analysis of this data and derive policy recommendations. For instance, in the **United Kingdom**, any public or private organization with 250 or more employees must publish gender pay gap data and report to the government via an online system.¹² This information highlights sectors where there is higher wage gap and incentivizes them to adopt equality and diversity policies.

Over the past decade, several countries have developed their own **benchmarks to track progress in building more inclusive public administrations**, drawing from both administrative data and employee surveys. **Finland** has a "*Diversity Barometer*" and **France** has implemented a "*Diversity Label*" to better track representation in public service.¹³ Meanwhile, **Armenia** has piloted UNDP's *Gender Equality Seal Award* methodology to mainstream gender and promote representation within key governmental institutions.¹⁴

The publication of **sex-disaggregated workforce data by national statistical offices or other agencies can facilitate changes in the recruitment, selection and promotion policies of public agencies**. For instance, **Ireland** has revised its recruitment and promotion practices to eliminate requirements that may directly or

^v Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Georgia, Honduras, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, North Macedonia, Samoa Seychelles, Ukraine, and Zambia.

Box 6. Producing statistics on gender identity

An increasing number of countries are introducing new concepts and methods for the collection of official statistics on sex and gender identity. While at this stage there are no international standards on measuring gender identity, some countries have made significant efforts to improve their data collection tools (administrative records, surveys and censuses) by going beyond a female-male binary distinction.

In **Nepal**, **Pakistan** and **Kenya**, have already introduced variables on gender identity in their censuses. In **India**, the Assam Public Service Commission added a “transgender” option in the gender category of the civil service examination form. However, these efforts are still at an early stage and measuring gender identity remains at a nascent stage in a majority of countries.

In **Canada**, this process started with extensive consultations with representatives of transgender groups, academia and experts to clarify statistical concepts and classifications. Specific questions for social surveys were then developed and validated among transgender and cisgender communities. In 2018, Statistics Canada published [new standards](#) distinguishing ‘sex at birth’ from ‘gender’. This new framework is based on a non-binary gender spectrum and reflects cisgender, transgender and non-binary gender identities. In 2019, standardized questions on sex at birth and gender status were incorporated into several surveys, as well as in the 2019 census test. Conclusive results confirmed their inclusion in the 2021 Census.

Source: Statistics Canada, *Sex at birth and gender [technical report on changes for the 2021 Census](#), 2020*; United Nations Economic and Social Council, *In-depth review of measuring gender identity, 2019*; Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *2019 National Population and Housing Census Volume IV: Distribution of Population by Socio-Economic Characteristics, 2019*; Zarir Hussain, “*Matter of pride: Indian state lets trans people register for civil service exam*”, October 30, 2020, Reuters.

indirectly discriminate certain groups of people. This includes reframing qualities or attributes listed in job descriptions so that they do not discriminate on the grounds of sex, gender, disability or ethnicity.¹⁵ **Uganda** has developed ‘*Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in Human Resource Management*’ in the public service, to guide the planning, monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming into human resource management.¹⁶ And in **Kyrgyzstan**, a new legal framework requires public agencies to recruit a qualified applicant of the less-represented sex, when all else is equal.¹⁷

Collecting data on women’s representation across decision-making levels and across ministries and agencies is also useful to detect glass ceilings (barriers that block women from moving up the ranks of an organization) **and glass walls** (barriers that keep men and women separated into different sectors, departments, and occupations).¹⁸ In **South Korea**, the underrepresentation of female managers in the public service has been addressed through the adoption of a quota system for female managers.¹⁹ In **Malaysia**, a similar quota system requiring 30% of senior positions to be filled by women has increased representation of women at the premier grade level in the public sector from 18.8% in 2004 to 32.2% in 2010.²⁰

Public sector employment data showing that women are **underrepresented in certain ministries or agencies, or at certain decision-making levels, can also point to a need to improve working conditions** in the public service. For example, the Public Service Gender Pay Gap Action Plan of **New Zealand** guarantees *flexible-by-default*^{vi} working arrangements in all

^{vi} A flexible-by-default approach treats all roles as suitable for flexible working arrangements unless there is a genuine business reason for any role not to be. See [Flexible-Work-by-Default Guidance](#).

public agencies.²¹ Meanwhile, some governments use incentive mechanisms to promote gender equality and better working conditions across the public service: in **Chile**, public agencies that develop workplans to improve gender equality are rewarded based on the results achieved.²²

II. Youth representation

Including younger adults in the public administration can **bring new knowledge, different skills and fresh perspectives** to a policy making process. Yet while data on representation across age groups is relatively accessible, it tends to be underutilized.

Most countries do not have youth representation as a 'diversity objective' within a public administration, but **initiatives aimed at attracting young employees are gradually increasing**. For instance, **Sri Lanka** has a *National Action Plan for Youth Employment* that includes quotas for young people in the public service. Similarly, **South Korea** has also established youth employment quotas in public agencies and public enterprises (at least 3% of the total workforce).²³

Since 2015, the **United Kingdom** has been implementing the "*Civil Service Fast Stream*" programme to attract talented graduates to a public service career. Through continuous monitoring and an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of graduates in the programme, the government made additional steps to increase the programme's socio-economic diversity.²⁴ As a result, in 2018, 31.2% of applicants were from minority ethnic groups, an increase of more than 10% since 2015.²⁵

Some governments have created **specific recruitment programmes for young people from minority and other underrepresented**

groups. In **France**, students from disadvantaged social backgrounds are supported in their preparation for the National School of Public Administration exams. In **Serbia**, young Roma in 24 municipalities were provided volunteer opportunities for skills development and employment in the public service.²⁶

In sub-Saharan Africa, the median age of the population is 18, and more than 36% of the population is aged between 20-34 years old.²⁷ This makes it **critical to have reliable data on public service employment across age groups to better understand youth employment barriers in the public service**. It is in this context that **South Africa**, through its National Youth Policy 2015–2020, committed to scaling up its public service internship programme to 60,000 internship opportunities, and linking the programme to government agencies' human resource development strategies.²⁸

Conducting additional **research to identify challenges and factors that influence young people's preferences to pursue a career in the public or the private sectors can help better target outreach efforts**. For example, research conducted among youth in **Egypt** showed that most young women seek employment in the public service due to its status, the security and benefits it provides, and limited employment opportunities in the private sector. These factors contributed to relatively high unemployment rates among young women as they chose to wait for public sector opportunities rather than go to the private sector.²⁹ This has led to efforts to actively focus on improving labor standards and working conditions in the private sector and supporting school-to-work transition programmes to increase employment opportunities for young women.

An analysis of age-disaggregated data across public agencies can also shed light on youth

preferences of employment in particular public offices and can help identify why certain offices or sectors are struggling to attract young people. These insights can **inform recruitment policies and improve outreach to educational institutions**. Initiatives to attract more young people to work in the public service may also include a stronger focus on training programmes, networking opportunities as well as mobility and other initiatives that may be appealing to youth.

III. Representation of persons with disabilities

With a representative public service workforce, the government can serve as **a model and an advocate for diversity, equality and inclusion, including for the private sector**. This is particularly important for one of the most underrepresented population groups in the public service: persons with disabilities. When compared to the availability of data on the representation of women and youth in the public service, **data on the representation of persons with disabilities in the public service is very limited**. For example, a survey conducted by the *European Public Administration Network* in 2015 showed that while most public administration diversity strategies focus on women and persons with disabilities, European countries generally do not collect data on the disability status of public sector employees.³⁰ **Even more scarce is data on women or racial or ethnic minorities with disabilities**. This data is essential to understand the extent to which population groups with intersecting and overlapping identities (women with disabilities, for example) are underrepresented in the public

service and to address the significant barriers they may face in accessing public service employment.

To overcome the data scarcity one strategy is to **collect the data on public service using the Washington Group on Disability Statistics^{vii} short set of questions** that can be integrated to Labour Force Surveys or other similar surveys. South Africa National Statistics Office used the short set of questions in the pilot for 16.7.1b to produce public services statistics using the human resources management information system of the Department of Public Service Administration. The experience indicated that it would be feasible to use the Washington Group methodology to collect data on persons with disabilities within the public service. The Washington Group is currently in the process of developing a harmonized framework for the collection of disability data for administrative data systems.³¹

Governments collecting disability-related data usually have diverse tools at their disposal. Some of them collect data by **integrating diversity elements in their administrative data**. For instance, *South Africa's* Department of Public Service Administration collects disability-related information of persons applying or hired, and keeps this data in the Personnel and Salary Centralized System.³² Other countries, such as the *United Kingdom* and *Canada*, generate disability data through **employee surveys or use various analytical tools such as inclusion indices (USA, New Inclusion Quotient Index)**.

Countries that generate data on the representation of persons with disabilities in the public service have used it to **inform various reform initiatives**. These initiatives are often accompanied by the **development of relevant regulatory frameworks and privacy protection measures**.

^{vii} The Washington Group is responsible for methodological development on disability measures suitable for censuses and national surveys. <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>

For instance, employment quota schemes for persons with disabilities are available in around 100 states parties to the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Two-thirds of these countries have quota systems for both the private and public sectors, and 24 apply this scheme only to the public sector.³³ In 2018, **Norway** launched a nationwide “*Inclusion Initiative*” which required public agencies to set an employment target of 5% for persons with disabilities and report on an annual basis on the progress achieved and measures implemented to reach the target.³⁴ Similarly, in 2005, **Ireland** introduced an employment target of 3% for persons with disabilities in public agencies, and this target has been gradually increasing to reach 6% by 2023.³⁵ Ireland’s National Disability Authority conducts annual statutory monitoring of employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector. Also, **Turkey** has introduced employment quotas for persons with disabilities in the public service (4%) and they are recruited through the state-run employment agency.³⁶ In **Peru** the employment quota for persons with disabilities is at 5% for public agencies. (See Box 7)

Governments can also use affirmative measures and specific policy initiatives to **promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the public service**. For instance, public agencies in **Australia** can advertise vacancies targeting persons with disabilities generally or persons with specific disabilities. This affirmative measure is available regardless of duties listed, and it is not restricted to jobs with disability-related functions.³⁷

An analysis of the data on the representation of persons with disabilities within the public service can help identify significant challenges faced in the recruitment processes. This analysis can lead to the **adoption of anti-discriminatory regulations, the revision of internal human resource management procedures and the development of additional guidance on interview, selection and hiring processes.** For example, considering that people with disabilities often rely on specific networks to find job opportunities, the Victorian

disabilities by posting all vacancies on a Disability Works Australia's employment register.³⁸

Raising **awareness of public sector employers on disability issues, equality legislation and specific measures to support the recruitment of persons with disabilities** can have a significant impact too. For example, in **Mexico**, the government trained more than 8000 public service employees and conducted 46 workshops to raise awareness about disability and inclusion issues in 2016-2017.³⁹ In **Israel**, large public sector

Box 7. Legal framework for the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector of Peru

Peru was the first Latin American country to ratify the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) in December 2007. Its key national legal act on promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities is the General Law on Persons with Disabilities of 2012 (29973). The Law sets high standards for promoting the employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors. The Law requires the state to reserve 10% of its budget to allocate on the promotion of temporary employment programmes for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the Acts provides that throughout the recruitment process in the public sector, applicants with a disability, who comply with the position requirements and achieve a passing examination grade, shall receive a bonus of 15% over the final grade obtained during the assessment.

The Act also sets an employment quota for both public and private agencies. Notably, it calls no less than 5% of public sector employees to be persons with disabilities and private entities with more than 50 workers are required to have no less than 3% of the employees who are persons with disabilities.

In addition, prior to any recruitment process, public entities must verify their compliance with the 5% quota. Public entities that do not comply with the employment quota shall be subject to penalty fees which then are used to fund professional development, placement and employment programmes for persons with disabilities.

In order to incentivize the recruitment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors, the Law calls for the deduction of expenses on the total amount of wages paid to these people at a rate set by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (50% if the company has up to 30% of its workforce made up of persons with disabilities and 80% if this percentage exceeds 30%).

The Civil Service National Authority is mandated to supervise the public entities in coordination with the National Council for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (CONADIS). The Act creates a strong national legal framework which, coupled with the effective implementation, and continuous monitoring can lead to increased representation of persons with disabilities in public agencies of Peru.

Source: [General Law on Persons with Disabilities \(2012\)](#)

Government of **Australia** was successful in significantly expanding the pool of applicants with

employers with more than 100 employees and less than 5% of employees with disabilities have to

publish an annual work programme outlining affirmative actions and outreach measures they plan to implement.⁴⁰

Public agencies can also lead by example by improving **job retention and increasing professional development opportunities for persons with disabilities**. They can draw from both quantitative and qualitative data (e.g. interview findings) on the educational backgrounds, individual skills, experiences and preferences of persons with disabilities employed in the public service to design effective professional development programmes, to enhance existing skills and to tap into often overlooked talent.

IV. Representation of other nationally relevant population groups

The methodology for SDG 16.7.1b considers a fourth dimension of disaggregation: nationally relevant population groups. **Countries are encouraged to identify the specific population groups that are relevant in their context based on their history as well as their socio-cultural situation**. However, national institutions are often **reluctant to collect data on the ethnic (or other) background of individuals, citing regulatory constraints and/or the sensitivity of such data**. As a result, the lack of reliable data on nationally relevant population groups makes it difficult to assess the scale of underrepresentation among these groups and undermines efforts to improve their representation.

The increasing availability of data on different nationally under-represented population groups can help to **strengthen the case for reform**. For instance, **Serbia**, a country with 19 ethnic groups that have minority status, amended its constitutional and legal provisions to facilitate

their adequate representation in the public administration. Notably, the amended Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities calls for affirmative action to achieve “appropriate representation of persons belonging to national minorities” in the public sector. Furthermore, the Constitution states that “the ethnic structure of the population and appropriate representation of members of national minorities shall be taken into consideration” in the management of public service employment.⁴¹

In **North Macedonia** public agencies are able to consider the ethnicity in the merit-based selection procedure, according to the Law on Public Sector Employment of 2015. Since 2017, each public agency has to prepare an annual employment plan that includes information on the ethnic distribution of the new workforce.⁴² This [web resource](#) draws on the most recent census information on the distribution of various ethnic groups and allows agencies to plan new hires in a more representative manner.

The affirmative policy measures introduced in the public employment sector of **Ecuador** has led to the recruitment of 70 members of the indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio peoples to the diplomatic corps in recent years.⁴³ (See Box 8)

To better understand and address the underrepresentation of nationally relevant groups, countries should **apply an intersectional lens and consider interwoven factors** (e.g. income levels, geography, sex, age, ethnic identity and sexual orientation, etc.) The Council of Europe’s *Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, for example, underlines that women belonging to some minority groups – such as the Roma people or indigenous peoples – can be disproportionately under-employed in public administration systems. Initiatives to reduce social exclusion and improve the employment prospects of these women include specific employment programmes, vocational education and language courses. For

instance, **Hungary** has employed 1100 Roma women in its public service and provided them with additional training and language courses.⁴⁴ **New Zealand** used disaggregated data on ethnic representation to detect wage inequalities among indigenous Maori and Pacific female civil servants and designed measures to tackle barriers associated with the combined effects of gender and ethnicity.⁴⁵

Representation of historically disadvantaged groups in the public service is particularly important in countries with a history of ethnic

or racial conflicts. In such contexts, representation of marginalized groups in the public service integrates new knowledge, experience and perspectives overlooked before and, more importantly, contributes towards the conflict resolution process. Not only can the public sector be a source of livelihoods for historically marginalized groups, but rather than perceiving the public service as one group exerting power over another, broadening participation can help to increase legitimacy and ownership of

Box 8. Policies increasing the representation of indigenous peoples in the public sector of Ecuador

The 2008 [Constitution of Ecuador](#) explicitly recognizes the demographic and cultural diversity of the population. The Constitution guarantees the right of 'indigenous communes, communities, peoples and nations' to maintain and develop their identities and ancestral traditions (Art. 57). The Constitution requires the state to acknowledge the diverse identities and take "affirmative measures to promote real equality for the benefit of the rights-bearers who are in a situation of inequality". These constitutional principles give rise to various national strategies and policies aimed at promoting equality and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples.

The new National Lifelong Development Plan 2017–2021 contains a range of policies and strategic guidelines for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. One of its objectives is to ensure interculturalism and plurinationality in the public administration and thus, facilitate the effective enjoyment of the rights of peoples and nationalities (indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio peoples) in the public sector.

In the last decade, as part of the Government's efforts to eliminate racial discrimination, a wide range of affirmative measures have been implemented to reinforce the employment of indigenous minority groups in the public sector. For instance, the Plurinational Plan to Eliminate Racial Discrimination and Ethnic and Cultural Exclusion requires all public agencies to ensure that Afro-Ecuadorians, indigenous peoples and Montubios have access to jobs in a proportion no smaller than their share of the population (Art. 3).

Efforts to promote a more representative public service also include the adoption of guidelines for merit-based selection processes and competitive examinations for entry into or promotion within public services. For example, the Ministry of Labour issued a Ministerial Decision establishing staff selection standards. Under article 31 of the Decision, peoples and nationalities who reach the final stages of a competitive hiring process in a public agency are attributed two additional points. The aim is to have 10% of the staff of Amazon administrative district be Afro-Ecuadorians, indigenous peoples and Montubios (4% by 2019, 6% by 2020, 8% by 2021).

By strengthening the legal and strategic framework together with the strengthened institutional structures (e.g. a specialized National Council for Equality of People and Nationalities established in 2014), Ecuador is moving towards a gradual increase in the representation of persons of Afro-Ecuadorians, indigenous and Montubio origin in the public sector.

Source: [Periodic report submitted by Ecuador to the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2020 \(ERD/C/ECU/25\)](#); [National Plan for Good Living of Ecuador \(2013-2017\)](#)

governmental processes and serve as entry point for participating in decision-making processes.

Over the past two decades, for instance, **South Africa** has dramatically altered the racial composition of its workforce by applying multiple affirmative initiatives coupled with strong legislative instruments and enforcement tools, in both the public and private sectors. Since 2011, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission of **Kenya** has been conducting annual ethnic audits in public agencies and public universities to assess the ethnic composition of their workforce, with the aim of addressing the historical underrepresentation of certain ethnic groups and facilitating peaceful ethnic co-existence in the country.⁴⁶

What is next for measuring SDG 16.7.1b?

Reporting on SDG indicator 16.7.1b is expected to begin in 2021. Countries are encouraged to start aligning their administrative data collection practices with the methodologies and approaches recommended for the indicator, including new classifications and reporting requirements and utilizing a human rights-based approach to data collection.

As custodian agency for this indicator, UNDP is committed to supporting countries in strengthening their data collection practices and enhancing the use of this data in policy making to promote a more inclusive and representative public service. Broadly speaking, three types of measures need to be taken by countries to reap the full benefits of collecting public service data (see Box 9 for examples of UNDP support in these three areas at the country level):

- 1) **Improve data collection on public service employees**, by incorporating global reporting requirements from indicator 16.7.1b into national data collection systems used for the public service, and by building the capacities of staff involved in the management of such systems across government institutions.
- 2) **Enhance the public availability of such data and build data literacy skills of potential users**, including policymakers as well as national oversight institutions, civil society and the media, to analyze the data on public service employment and draw attention to imbalances in representation where needed.
- 3) **Ensure that 16.7.1b data feeds into the design of inclusive human resources policies for the public service**, by ensuring that statistical analysis and key findings lead to concrete actions to make recruitment strategies and career development policies more inclusive.

Box 9 – Examples of UNDP support on promoting inclusion and representation in the public service

Enhancing statistical capacities for reporting on SDG 16.7.1b

In **Bangladesh**, UNDP worked with key government stakeholders to raise awareness and provide methodological guidance for generating data on SDG 16.7.1b.

Strengthening national data ecosystems

In **Georgia**, UNDP supported the National Statistics Office in developing its *National Strategy and Action Plan* for data collection on the SDGs. UNDP is also working with the public service authorities to upgrade the nationwide public service human resource database.

Improving data collection policies or data collection tools/platforms used by public administrations

In **Togo**, UNDP supported the development of a centralized public service data management system.

Ensuring the use of disaggregated data

The **Uganda** Bureau of Statistics and the Gender Monitoring Office were supported by the UN system to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data to inform policy making.

Engaging civil society and the media on SDG data

The National Statistics Office of **Moldova** is working with UNDP to develop modules on statistical literacy and disaggregated statistical analysis for civil society organization and the media, including on 16.7.1b.

Strengthening partnerships on public service statistics

Within the framework of the **GEPA Initiative** (*Gender Equality in Public Administration*), UNDP cooperates with the *Gender Inequality Research Lab* of the *University of Pittsburg* to compile and analyze publicly available data on women's participation in public administration.

Supporting inclusive human resource management practices and tools

In **Malawi**, UNDP worked with national partners to develop gender-sensitive recruitment guidelines for the public service. Similarly, in **Mexico**, UNDP worked with national authorities to develop guidance on gender-inclusiveness and to eliminate the use of gender stereotypes in the Mexican public administration.

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For more information, please contact sdg16indicators@undp.org and see <https://www.undp.org/content/oslo-governance-centre/en/home.html>

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