Women in the Judiciary Dashboard

Technical note

The Women in the Judiciary Dashboard is a global platform that tracks and visualizes women's representation in the judiciary across different court levels worldwide. By compiling and harmonizing official country data, it provides a globally comparable overview of gender representation across judicial benches. This technical note outlines the concepts, methodology, and data sources used to compile the Women in the Judiciary Dashboard.

Overview

The Dashboard compiles and disseminates global data on women's representation in the judiciary in line with the official methodology and metadata for SDG indicator 16.7.1(c). The indicator measures the representation of demographic groups, including women, youth, persons with disability, and nationally relevant population groups, across two key decision-making positions - judges and registrars - and across three levels of courts: supreme/constitutional courts, higher-level courts and lower-level courts. Data collection and computation of the data presented in the Dashboard follows the official metadata for SDG indicator 16.7.1(c) adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Data Coverage

The dashboard currently includes data from more than 120 countries across all regions and income groups. Country and time coverage will expand as additional data are reported through the SDG reporting process or directly submitted to UNDP by relevant national institutions.

Data are available from 2015 onwards, corresponding to the monitoring period of the Sustainable Development Goals. The most recent update reflects data reported through the 2026 UNDP Global Call for Data.

Regional Groupings

Country groupings used in the Dashboard follow the geographic regions defined in the United Nations Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use (M49) maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division. Regional aggregates are presented according to the SDG regional groupings to ensure consistency with the global SDG reporting framework and comparability across SDG indicators and estimates.

Regional estimates presented on the dashboard are calculated using latest available country-level data. Countries with missing data are excluded from regional estimates.

Data collection method

The data disseminated through the dashboard are collected as part of UNDP's custodianship of SDG indicator 16.7.1(c). Data are collected annually through the UNDP Global Call for Data on SDG 16 indicators, which takes place between November and January each year. In 2026, UNDP completed its fifth global data collection cycle.

Data are submitted through a dedicated SDG 16 Data Reporting Platform. National Statistical Offices (NSOs), or other institutions within the National Statistical System, serve as the primary national coordinators for SDG reporting. While NSOs may not always produce judicial statistics directly, they are responsible for coordinating with relevant institutions to compile and submit the required data.

Relevant national data-producing institutions may include:

- Ministries of Justice
- Supreme Courts
- Judicial Councils
- National judicial administrations
- Other official statistical producers

NSOs retain final responsibility for validating the accuracy and completeness of national submissions. Where a national SDG focal point is not available, UNDP Country Offices support the identification of appropriate institutional focal points and facilitate data submission.

When data are obtained from institutions other than the NSO, they are shared with Member States through the SDG16 Data Reporting Platform for review and validation prior to publication.

Data Sources

The dataset is compiled primarily from official national sources, including:

- National Statistical Offices
- Ministries of Justice
- Supreme Courts
- Judicial Councils
- Official statistical publications
- National judicial administration reports
- Regional judicial monitoring initiatives such as CEPEJ
- Official research papers or statistical reports published by national institutions and/or international and regional organizations

Concepts and definitions

The concepts and terminology used in the dataset reflect the broad characteristics of judicial systems worldwide while recognizing differences across national legal traditions.

Focus on formal court system: The judiciary refers to the system of courts responsible for the administration of justice within the formal state structure. The data collection focuses on the formal court system and does not include within its scope informal or customary dispute resolution mechanisms such as religious courts, tribal systems, or other traditional dispute resolution mechanisms.

Levels of courts: To facilitate international comparability, courts are grouped into three categories:

- Supreme/Constitutional courts: Courts within a country with the highest authority to interpret the law. The category includes both supreme courts (i.e., the highest judicial bodies in the domain of civil and criminal jurisdiction) and constitutional courts (i.e., the

legal bodies responsible for ensuring the compatibility of legislation with the provisions and principles of the constitution in each country, in particular to protect constitutionally established rights and freedoms). Constitutional courts include those courts that sit only on constitutional issues, as well as courts that sit as constitutional courts only on occasion when constitutional issues arise. In federal court systems, highest courts include supreme courts and constitutional courts at the national level, but excludes any supreme courts that may exist at sub-national levels, as these should be included within the category of higher-level courts. In certain jurisdictions, the supreme court and constitutional court might be one and the same and therefore there would be just one court for the category of supreme/constitutional courts.

- Higher-level courts: Higher-level courts include other high courts, high-level courts, and courts of appeal. In federal court systems, higher-level courts include higher-level courts at both the national and sub-national levels and also include supreme courts at subnational levels.
- Lower-level courts: Lower-level courts encompass first-instance or frontline courts of local jurisdiction. This category includes local courts, district courts, magisterial courts, and magistrate courts. In federal court systems, lower-level courts include lower-level courts of both national and sub-national court systems.

This broad categorization is elaborated to encompass the diversity of judicial systems across the world, including across different types of legal systems (common law, civil law, etc.) and across different types of government (unitary, federal, etc.)

Note on specialized courts: The determination of whether specialized courts or tribunals, or a subset thereof, fall within supreme/constitutional, higher-level, or lower-level courts is left to the discretion of countries. Specialized courts are courts that have limited jurisdiction over a specialized subject matter, and may include, but are not limited to, war crimes courts, gender-based violence courts, commercial courts, finance courts, labour courts, family courts, property courts, military courts, administrative courts, social welfare courts, juvenile courts, courts for organized crime, narcotics, and corruption, etc. In many jurisdictions, specialized courts are considered higher-level courts. In such jurisdictions, these specialized courts might have exclusive or original jurisdiction over certain claims, and therefore act in the first instance for those claims, but are nevertheless considered higher-level courts. In other jurisdictions, specialized courts might be considered lower-level courts or supreme courts. Some jurisdictions might categorize a subset of specialized courts as higher-level courts and another subset as lower-level courts. Countries determine how these courts are classified within the three court levels depending on national judicial structures.

Unit of measurement

The dataset include:

- Number of judges by sex
- Number of judges by sex and court level
- Number of judges by age (total, not disaggregated by sex)
- Percentage of women judges
- Percentage of women judges by court level
- Time trends

Data availability varies across countries depending on national statistical reporting practices and data availability. There is no imputation of missing values, and countries are included in the database only when sex-disaggregated data for judges are available.

Unless otherwise specified, figures refer to the number of individuals (headcount) rather than full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Countries reporting data in FTE are identified in the notes.

Although data on registrars are collected as part of SDG indicator 16.7.1(c), they are not currently disseminated through the dashboard due to limited country coverage. Similarly, some countries report additional disaggregations for judges by disability status or nationally relevant population groups (e.g., immigrant background or ethnic groups). Because the number of reporting countries remains limited, these data are currently available only upon request.

Indicator Computation

The indicators presented in the dashboard are calculated using the following formulas.

$$\textit{Share of women judges} = \frac{Number\ of\ women\ judges}{Total\ number\ of\ judges} x\ 100$$

$$\textit{Share of women judges by court} = \frac{Number\ of\ women\ judges\ in\ court\ level\ C}{Total\ number\ of\ judges\ in\ court\ level\ C}\ x\ 100$$

$$\textit{Share of women judges in age category A} = \frac{Number\ of\ women\ judges\ in\ age\ category\ A}{Total\ number\ of\ judges\ \ with\ available\ age\ data}\ x\ 100$$

Age-disaggregated data are currently available only for the total number of judges and are not disaggregated by sex. In cases where age information is available only for a subset of judges, percentages are calculated using the number of judges with available age data as the denominator.

$$\textit{SDG indicator 16.7.1(c)} = \frac{Share\ of\ women\ judges}{Share\ of\ women\ in\ the\ working\ age\ population}$$

SDG indicator 16.7.1(c) measures the representation of women in the judiciary relative to their share in the working-age population. For global reporting purposes, the share of women in the working-age population is assumed to be 50 percent, in line with the SDG metadata.

Data Validation

Data submission undergoes a multi-stage validation process. UNDP reviews submitted data for, internal consistency, completeness, alignment with indicator definitions, logical consistency across court levels. Where discrepancies are identified, UNDP conducts follow-up consultations with national focal points. Final responsibility for validating country data rests with national statistical authorities and designated SDG focal points.

Comparability and limitations

Judicial systems vary significantly across countries in structure, terminology, and jurisdiction. Although the SDG indicator 16.7.1(c) applies standardized court-level groupings to improve international comparability, some differences remain due to variations in court hierarchies, different treatment of specialized courts, inclusion or exclusion of lay judges or justices of the peace, differences in administrative reporting systems. In addition, some countries may report aggregate judiciary data without court-level disaggregation, and data availability may vary across years. As mentioned above, there is no imputation of missing values, and countries are included in the database only when sex-disaggregated data for judges are available. These factors should be considered when interpreting cross-country comparisons. UNDP will continue to improve comparability and data completeness as new data becomes available.

Data revisions

The Dashboard reflects the most recent validated country data available at the time of update. It disseminates data collected through the SDG reporting process and aligned with the UN SDG Global Database. In some cases, however, the Dashboard may include more recent validated country submissions that have not yet been incorporated into the latest release of the UN SDG Global Database.

Data may be revised when countries submit updated information or corrections through the SDG reporting process or other official national channels. UNDP works closely with national institutions to support the production, validation, and reporting of data on representation in the judiciary under SDG indicator 16.7.1(c).

Dataset characteristics

Access: www.womeninjudiciary.undp.org

Custodian agency: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Global Policy Centre for Governance (GPCG)

Last updated: 12 March 2026

Update frequency: The dashboard is updated periodically as new data become available through the SDG reporting process or through direct submissions by relevant national authorities outside the SDG reporting process.

Data download: All data disseminated through the dashboard are available for download in Excel format. The dataset is publicly available for use with appropriate citation.

Suggested citation:
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The Centre also acknowledges the important role of SDG National Focal Points in coordinating national reporting and ensuring the timely submission of data.

Finally, the Centre expresses its gratitude to UNDP Country Offices for their support to national institutions in facilitating data compilation, validation, and reporting.