

## **Closing the Data Gap between Gender and Corruption<sup>1</sup>**

Working Group on Gender, Inclusion and Corruption<sup>2</sup> of the Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC Submission to CoSP11

**19 November 2025**

### **The urgent need for gendered analyses of corruption data**

The negative impact of corruption undermining governance, development and trust in institutions is further exacerbated by gender roles, power asymmetries and social norms. Women, men, and gender-diverse people experience corruption differently, but these differences remain obscured when data is not disaggregated by gender. Women's higher reliance on services such as health, education, and social protection amplifies their exposure to bribery and extortion in everyday interactions. In these settings, victims may face monetary bribes they cannot afford or coercive non-monetary demands that exchange sex for access to rights, services, or opportunities, a practice frequently termed sexual corruption or "sextortion."<sup>3</sup> With most mainstream governance indicators being silent on sexual corruption and other gendered abuses of authority, these harms remain largely invisible. Lacking a gender-responsive evidence base, anti-corruption strategies risk reproducing inequalities by failing to protect those most at risk.

Strengthening gender-responsive evidence contributes to broader efforts to redistribute knowledge and decision-making power within anti-corruption systems and institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> UNCAC Coalition. "Measuring the relationship between gender and corruption: Closing the data gap", accessed 20 November 2025. <https://uncaccoalition.org/measuring-the-relationship-between-gender-and-corruption-closing-the-data-gap/>.

<sup>2</sup> The Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC's Working Group on Gender, Inclusion and Corruption comprises of over 200 members, from civil society organizations, activists, academia and other stakeholders. It seeks to influence and inspire others to pay more attention to gender and inclusion in anti-corruption policy and practice, share ideas on new research questions for academics to undertake around gender and corruption, and advance for better data on gender and corruption. UNCAC Coalition. "Gender, Inclusion and Corruption Working Group." UNCAC Coalition, accessed 20 November 2025. <https://uncaccoalition.org/get-involved/working-groups/gender-inclusion-corruption/>.

<sup>3</sup> Transparency International. "Breaking the silence around sextortion: The links between power, sex and corruption," 2020. [https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2020\\_Report\\_BreakingSilenceAroundSextortion\\_English.pdf](https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2020_Report_BreakingSilenceAroundSextortion_English.pdf)

Therefore, gender-disaggregated data is essential, revealing differential exposure and impact, enabling targeted interventions, and strengthening accountability for better outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

## The current gender data landscape

In 2025, the Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC's Gender, Inclusion & Corruption Working Group mapped 18 global, regional, and national datasets relevant to understanding the relationship between gender and corruption.<sup>5</sup> The study revealed the following gaps:

- The range of datasets is broad but shallow, with most sources relying on perception and self-reported experience measures. Whilst informative, these are vulnerable to social desirability bias, fear of retaliation, and political context. Objective or event-based measures of corruption are even rarer, and where they exist, they often lack a gender lens. Criminal law cases are also not typically captured in corruption datasets or databases and subsequently are not used in analyses.
- Only a subset of multinational instruments consistently enables sex-disaggregation at the respondent level. Even more uncommon are instruments designed to capture gendered forms of corruption. For example, while some waves of a major global barometer included sexual corruption questions, this remains the exception rather than the rule, leaving coercive non-monetary exchanges largely undocumented across countries and over time.
- Regional coverage is uneven. Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe benefit from a richer ecosystem of sources, combining citizen surveys with institutional assessments, than other regions. Asia, the Americas, and the South West Asia and North Africa region have lower coverage. This pattern limits the ability to compare contexts and track progress.<sup>5</sup>
- Sectoral blind spots persist. Corruption risks in healthcare, education, law enforcement, and defence are routinely cited by citizens and practitioners, yet few datasets examine these sectors with a systematic gender lens. Where sectoral instruments do exist, mixed-methods approaches that combine surveys with qualitative research are rare, even though qualitative evidence is crucial to understanding how coercion operates and how victims navigate risk.
- Fragmentation and a lack of agreed-upon standards impede cross-country comparability and trend analysis. Infrastructure datasets on gender equality provide

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<sup>4</sup> UNODC, "Resolution 10/10 on Addressing the societal impacts of corruption," CAC/COSP/2023/L.14/Rev.1, (December 15, 2023). [https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/resolutions/L-documents/2325384E\\_L14\\_Rev.1.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/resolutions/L-documents/2325384E_L14_Rev.1.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> UNCAC Coalition. "Measuring the relationship between gender and corruption: Closing the data gap", accessed 20 November 2025. <https://uncaccoalition.org/measuring-the-relationship-between-gender-and-corruption-closing-the-data-gap/>.

Note: Many other lenses and intersectoral factors contribute to inequities such as race, class, region, etc, but were not included in the scope of this review.

useful proxy indicators, but they cannot substitute for corruption-specific, gender-disaggregated measures. The result is a data ecosystem that is wide in coverage yet shallow where it matters most for designing effective, inclusive reforms.

## Why this matters

CoSP Resolution 10/10 explicitly recognises sexual corruption and calls for gender considerations in anti-corruption work. But commitments alone cannot shift practice without data. Gender-disaggregated corruption data enables States Parties to detect hidden forms of abuse, identify who is most affected and where, and evaluate whether reforms advance equity and accountability. It also supports rights-based monitoring by revealing whether safeguards, complaint mechanisms, and sanctions are protecting survivors and deterring abuse. Further, closing the gender gap provides epistemic justice, which ensures the voices and knowledge of marginalized groups are heard and taken seriously. The broader research base links women's participation and diversity in decision-making with improved accountability and, in some contexts, lower corruption.<sup>6</sup> Robust, harmonised data is necessary to test these relationships credibly across settings and over time. Embedding a gender lens in routine data systems is therefore not ancillary to the Convention; it is fundamental to effective, fair, and sustainable implementation.

## Recommendations to States Parties

To operationalise a gender-responsive approach that aligns with UNCAC obligations, the Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC Working Group on Gender, Inclusion & Corruption Task Force on Gender and Data urges States Parties to:

1. Advocate for sex- and gender-disaggregated data collection in all corruption-related surveys, governance indices, and administrative systems, with open access by default.
2. Standardize definitions and methodologies to measure gendered corruption, including sexual corruption and other non-monetary abuses of authority, enabling cross-country and over-time comparisons.
3. Invest in sector-specific, mixed-methods research on gender and corruption, prioritising health, education, law enforcement, and defence, so reforms target real risks.

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<sup>6</sup> Frédéric Boehm, "Are men and women equally corrupt?" U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 2015. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/5851-are-men-and-women-equally-corrupt.pdf>; Caitlin Maslen, "Gender transformative approaches to anti-corruption," U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre & Transparency International, 2025. <https://www.u4.no/publications/gender-transformative-approaches-to-anti-corruption.pdf>.

4. Establish safe, survivor-centred, gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms and protections against retaliation and stigma, integrating referral pathways to support services that ensure confidentiality, autonomy, and protection from retaliation.
5. Ensure public accessibility of datasets and documentation to foster evidence-based policymaking and independent scrutiny.

Corruption perpetuates inequality and undermines rights. Its gendered dimensions remain under-measured because the evidence base is sparse, fragmented, and often blind to lived realities. Closing this gap is both a moral and practical imperative. By committing to systematic collection, analysis, and publication of gender-disaggregated corruption data, States Parties can design reforms that protect those most at risk, strengthen accountability, and advance integrity and equality together.