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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”****Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women****Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women***Summary*

The present report provides a summary of the normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Entity’s contribution to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in intergovernmental processes. It also provides information on how the Entity has contributed to the implementation of the policy guidance provided by the Commission on the Status of Women.

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\* E/CN.6/2017/1.



## I. Introduction

1. The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [64/289](#), provides an overview of the work carried out by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in support of the development of a comprehensive set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

2. In 2016, work began on implementing the historic intergovernmental outcomes adopted in 2015, namely, the political declaration adopted on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (see [E/2015/27](#), resolution [59/1](#)), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (General Assembly resolution [69/283](#), annex II), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (General Assembly resolution [69/313](#), annex), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution [70/1](#)), the Paris Agreement adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-first session (see [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21) and Security Council resolution [2242 \(2015\)](#) on women and peace and security adopted in response to the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). These outcomes further strengthened the global commitment to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and, taken together, constitute a gender equality compact. UN-Women harnessed this renewed momentum to provide substantive and technical support to Member States in the formulation and strengthening of global policy guidance on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including in areas that have not traditionally integrated a gender perspective.

3. UN-Women continued to provide substantive support in relation to all aspects of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, including the process leading to the adoption in March 2016 of its agreed conclusions on women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development (see [E/2016/27](#)), which set out a road map for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Entity's normative support to the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and thematic intergovernmental processes helped to increase the attention paid to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and expand the integration of gender perspectives into their outcome documents. UN-Women had to draw on voluntary contributions in order to carry out its mandate relating to the provision of normative support, as noted by the General Assembly (see General Assembly resolution [70/133](#)).

## II. Strengthening the normative work on gender equality

4. Section II provides an overview of the support provided by UN-Women to strengthen gender equality norms and standards in the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

## A. Commission on the Status of Women

5. UN-Women, as the substantive secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, supported all aspects of the work of the Commission in its role as the principal global policymaking body charged with setting global standards and formulating policies to promote gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and women's rights worldwide.

6. At its sixtieth session, the Commission considered the priority theme "Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development". In the report of the Secretary-General prepared by UN-Women on the priority theme (E/CN.6/2016/3), the Secretary-General argued that the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and their human rights was essential for the achievement of sustainable development in its three dimensions. The Secretary-General stressed that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should enhance substantive equality for women and girls and target multiple and intersecting inequalities in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

7. UN-Women provided substantive and technical advice during the negotiations on the agreed conclusions on the priority theme. In the agreed conclusions, the Commission acknowledged that the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda required accelerated action on both recent and long-standing commitments on achieving gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and their human rights. The Commission identified the enabling conditions needed at the national, regional and global levels to promote the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda and provided guidance to stakeholders, including civil society and women's organizations, on strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks, increasing investment in and financing for gender equality, strengthening gender-responsive data collection and follow-up, and strengthening women's leadership and participation in decision-making in all areas. The Commission called upon Governments to strengthen the authority and capacities of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women with a view to supporting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and to promote the coherence and coordination of national gender equality mechanisms with relevant government agencies and other stakeholders. It also called upon UN-Women to continue to play a central role in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda. The Commission transmitted its agreed conclusions as an input to the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

8. Drawing on the agreed conclusions, UN-Women identified 10 vectors of action to support Member States and other stakeholders in accelerating the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely: inspiration, implementation, indivisibility, integration, inclusion, institutions, investment, information, innovation and impact.

9. The Commission considered as its review theme "The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls", and evaluated the progress made in the implementation of the agreed conclusions adopted at its fifty-

seventh session (see [E/2013/27](#)). UN-Women prepared the report of the Secretary-General on the review theme ([E/CN.6/2016/4](#)), which provided a summary of the impact, trends, gaps and challenges relating to action taken at the national level to eliminate and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls.

10. The Commission adopted four resolutions at its sixtieth session on its multi-year programme of work; the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women; the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts; and women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS. UN-Women provided technical support to the facilitators of the resolutions on the multi-year programme of work and the resolution on women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS.

## B. General Assembly

11. UN-Women continued to provide normative support to the General Assembly through research, policy analysis, and recommendations for reports of the Secretary-General and the provision of substantive and technical expertise to Member States. The inputs enabled Member States to continue to take action on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the global, regional and country levels.

12. UN-Women prepared three mandated reports of the Secretary-General on the following topics: intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations ([A/71/209](#)); intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls ([A/71/219](#)); and trafficking in women and girls ([A/71/223](#)). One year after meeting on the theme “Global leaders’ meeting on gender equality and women’s empowerment: a commitment to action”, co-hosted by UN-Women and the Government of China on 27 September 2015, at which 72 Heads of State and Government had made pledges, 24 countries provided updates to UN-Women on progress made in the implementation of commitments.<sup>1</sup>

13. UN-Women provided normative support to Member States in an effort to strengthen gender perspectives in resolutions of the General Assembly. An analysis conducted by UN-Women on the integration of a gender perspective in resolutions adopted by the Assembly during its seventieth session<sup>2</sup> demonstrated that 43 per cent of Assembly resolutions integrated a gender perspective. On the basis of that analysis, the work of the Second and Third Committees was targeted owing to its significant scope for adding or expanding gender perspectives. In that connection, UN-Women identified key gender equality goals and provided support to Member States during the negotiations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. UN-Women also stepped up its outreach on topics covered by the First Committee.

14. During the high-level week of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, UN-Women organized two high-level side events. The Entity launched a

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<sup>1</sup> See Member State commitments: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up/commitments>.

<sup>2</sup> Available from <http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/intergovsupport/ga71-infographic-2-genderperspectiveinga70resolutions-en.pdf?v=1&d=20160929T183223>.

new public-private partnership to support its flagship programming initiative on the theme “Making every woman and girl count”, which will help to promote the investment of resources and expertise in the generation and use of gender data. Through the initiative, UN-Women will assist countries in putting in place evidence-based, targeted policies to fully implement and track progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. At the event, stakeholders made commitments to improve the collection and use of gender data and pledged financial resources. Mexico committed to establishing a global centre of excellence in gender statistics, with a view to undertaking research and producing high-quality gender data. Australia and the United States of America committed to contributing \$6.5 million and \$5 million, respectively, in support of the initiative.

15. UN-Women and the secretariat of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment co-hosted a side event to present the Panel’s interim report entitled “Leave no one behind: a call to action for gender equality and women’s economic empowerment”. The report, a product of the collective efforts of the members of the Panel and a broad range of stakeholders from around the world, set out seven key principles to guide action on women’s economic empowerment: (a) tackling adverse norms and promoting positive role models; (b) ensuring legal protections and reforming discriminatory laws and regulations; (c) recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid work and care; (d) building digital, financial and property assets; (e) changing business culture and practice; (f) improving public sector practices in employment and procurement; and (g) strengthening visibility, collective voice and representation.

### C. Security Council

16. The normative support provided by UN-Women to the Security Council encompassed policy analysis and research for thematic and country-specific work, servicing functions and support for the direct engagement of women representatives of civil society in the work of the Council.

17. In 2016, the Security Council convened its annual open debate on women and peace and security, which focused on action taken by Member States and other stakeholders in follow-up to the commitments and recommendations resulting from the 2015 high-level review on the implementation of Council resolution 1325 (2000), including recommendations and commitments outlined in the global study on the implementation of Council resolution 1325 (2000)<sup>3</sup> and Council resolution 2242 (2015), and the recommendations from the related reviews on peacekeeping operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446) and on the peacebuilding architecture (A/69/968-S/2015/490). Future steps for advancing the agenda were also discussed, taking into account the new threats and challenges that have emerged, including the continued spread and impact of terrorism and violent extremism. UN-Women, with the support of the Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security, coordinated the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security

<sup>3</sup> Radhika Coomaraswamy, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (UN-Women, 2015), available from <http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf>.

(S/2016/822), which informed the debate. In addition to the annual open debate, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women briefed the Security Council on the situation in Liberia on 17 March and on the role of women in conflict prevention in Africa on 28 March.

18. In its resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council established an Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security as a follow-up mechanism to the 2015 high-level review. As the secretariat of the Expert Group, UN-Women convened United Nations entities, including peace operations, and civil society organizations to brief Council members on gender-specific concerns and priorities in situations on the Council's agenda. In 2016, the Expert Group met to discuss developments in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Iraq and Mali and contributed to a more systematic approach to women, peace and security in the Council's work.

19. The 2015 peace and security reviews contributed to a growing acceptance of the pivotal role of women as peacebuilders and of more determined action to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. One of the outcomes of the global study and the 2015 high-level review was the launch of the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, which seeks to address some of the funding gaps preventing progress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. In 2016, the Global Acceleration Instrument supported women-centred peacebuilding initiatives in several countries.

20. Terrorism and violent extremism continue to have devastating consequences, which affect women and men differently. In resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council requested counter-terrorism bodies to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue and urged Member States and United Nations entities to conduct research on the drivers of radicalization and the impact of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations. Efforts to foster coordination and coherence in this area led to the establishment by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force of a working group on adopting a gender-sensitive approach to preventing and countering terrorism, chaired by UN-Women.

21. UN-Women played an important role in advancing the women and peace and security agenda by making its technical expertise on gender equality issues available to key actors supporting peace processes and mediation efforts, by deploying experts on sexual and gender-based violence crimes to international investigations by commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions and by supporting the development and implementation of national and regional action plans and strategies on women, peace and security. As of May 2016, 63 countries had adopted such plans, 11 more than in 2015.

#### **D. Economic and Social Council**

22. UN-Women continued to engage with and provide normative support to the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies. The Entity's research, policy analysis, recommendations for the reports of the Secretary-General and technical and substantive expertise contributed to enhanced attention to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the deliberations and outcomes of these bodies.

23. As it had done in previous years, UN-Women prepared the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (see E/2016/57). In the report, the Secretary-General assessed the progress made in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and in mainstreaming gender perspectives into the operational activities of the United Nations development system. He concluded that in 2015 the System-wide Action Plan continued to catalyse progress on gender mainstreaming. The proportion of ratings indicative of meeting or exceeding requirements increased by 26 percentage points between 2012 and 2015, to a total of 57 per cent. Recent progress was recorded in particular in the areas of capacity development, policy and planning, and resource tracking. He also noted that United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and joint programmes proved to be key drivers of United Nations system coordination at the country level in operational activities on gender equality.

24. The Entity provided technical support to Member States during the negotiation process on Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. The Council called upon the United Nations system to accelerate the full and effective mainstreaming of a gender perspective, commensurate with the gender-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Member States expressed serious concern regarding the lack of progress towards achieving gender balance in the United Nations system, in particular at the senior and policymaking levels. The resolution will contribute to the current revision of the System-wide Action Plan. The next phase of the Plan is expected to come into effect in 2018 and will help the United Nations system to track progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

25. UN-Women placed high priority on participating in the inaugural session of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up. As a member of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, the Entity contributed to the Task Force's inaugural report entitled *Addis Ababa Action Agenda: Monitoring commitments and Actions*, which was issued in March 2016. In the report, the Task Force presented the monitoring framework and data sources to be used for annual assessments of progress. It discussed the challenges in monitoring the gender-specific commitments of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and identified existing data sources. The monitoring of gender-responsive budgeting will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals indicator framework. UN-Women participated in the forum's round table on a global framework for sustainable development, at which it highlighted that mainstreaming a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies was essential to fulfil the 2030 Agenda. It also highlighted that the institutionalization of a gender-responsive approach to public finance, including through budgeting, macroeconomic policies and tracking public expenditure across all sectors, would contribute to that end. UN-Women encouraged Member States to commit to implementing the voluntary Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and to report on its implementation.



26. In 2016, the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, met for the first time since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. As the importance of the forum with regard to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda had been emphasized in the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women, UN-Women systematically provided normative support to Member States in the preparations for the forum. At a side event convened by the Entity during the integration segment of the Council in May 2016, with the participation of the Chair of the Commission, participants presented ways in which Member States could integrate gender perspectives into the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. UN-Women also used the side event to outline opportunities for and stakeholder expectations regarding the integration of a gender perspective in voluntary national reviews, in line with the commitment to systematically mainstream a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The efforts prompted a significant number of Member States to address gender perspectives in their national voluntary presentations. The lessons learned from the session should further enhance the gender-responsiveness of national voluntary presentations at the high-level political forum in 2017.

27. UN-Women provided substantive support to Member States during the negotiations on the ministerial declaration ([E/HLS/2016/1](#)). In the declaration, which provides guidance to Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Ministers and high representatives reaffirmed their commitment to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including through the systematic mainstreaming of gender equality in the implementation of all goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

28. Following its participation in and contribution to the World Humanitarian Summit, the Entity continued its active engagement with the issue during the humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council. The Entity advocated the integration of stronger gender perspectives into the outcome of the segment and the inclusion, in particular, of the five core commitments on gender equality identified at the Summit. In response, the Council adopted resolution 2016/9, on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, which contains new commitments on gender equality and humanitarian assistance, including in the areas of women's participation, sexual and reproductive health services, sexual and gender-based violence, sex-disaggregated data, gender balance in the composition of humanitarian staff and mainstreaming a gender perspective at all stages of a humanitarian response. This outcome constitutes a strong basis for the Entity's continued work in this area.

29. UN-Women provided normative support to other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council with a view to further strengthening gender mainstreaming and promoting the catalytic role of the Commission on the Status of Women. To this end, UN-Women participated in the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, held at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development. At the event, UN-Women elaborated on the need for greater gender perspectives in the field of disability policy, building on the contribution of the Commission on the Status of Women in that regard.



30. The Entity contributed to the thematic discussion of the twenty-fifth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and identified opportunities for the integration of stronger gender perspectives in Commission resolution 25/2 (see E/2016/30) on promoting legal aid, including through a network of legal aid providers. The efforts of UN-Women to promote stronger gender perspectives are reflected in Economic and Social Council resolutions 2016/17, on restorative justice in criminal matters, and 2016/18, on mainstreaming holistic approaches in youth crime prevention.

31. UN-Women, together with the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, participated in a side event of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held during its reconvened fifty-ninth session, on jointly supporting gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which built upon Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 59/5 on mainstreaming a gender perspective in drug-related policies and programmes.

## **II. Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women through thematic international and other normative processes**

32. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the commitment undertaken to systematically mainstream a gender perspective in its implementation gave further impetus to the normative support, engagement and advocacy efforts of UN-Women in relation to a range of intergovernmental processes. The Entity provided evidence, examples of good practices and effective strategies to serve as a basis for incorporating gender perspectives in discussions and outcomes, and brought together stakeholders to exchange views. The efforts resulted in significant gains for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and their human rights in the normative framework and strengthened the basis for implementation at the country level. The following section summarizes the key areas of support provided by UN-Women.

### **A. Urban agenda**

33. Since 2014, UN-Women has devoted considerable attention to the preparatory processes leading up to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). In an effort to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a key component of the New Urban Agenda, the Entity collaborated closely with partners, including United Nations system entities and civil society organizations, and convened several events at the regional and global levels. UN-Women provided normative support to and shared its substantive expertise with Member States during the intergovernmental negotiations on the New Urban Agenda. In particular, the Entity issued an analysis entitled “Gender equality and the New Urban Agenda”, focusing on opportunities to promote sustainable, gender-responsive cities where women are key decision makers, and arguing that achieving the New Urban Agenda would require strengthened gender-responsive financing and investment and the improved availability of quality data disaggregated by sex and age.

34. The New Urban Agenda embodies a commitment by Governments to promote inclusivity and to ensure that all inhabitants, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements. It contains a shared vision of cities and human settlements that achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including by ensuring equal participation in decision-making, decent work and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and by preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces. Member States committed to promoting gender-responsive housing policies, land and property policies, mobility and transportation policies, disaster risk reduction and resilience policies, and to promoting gender-responsive approaches at all stages of the urban and territorial policy and planning processes.

35. At Habitat III, UN-Women, together with other stakeholders, promoted the gender-responsive implementation of the New Urban Agenda. In particular, the Entity participated in the Women's Assembly and supported the formulation of concrete recommendations for Governments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in urban settings, and discussed ways to operationalize the recommendations within the United Nations system. The Entity briefed mayors and other local officials on new and long-term gender equality commitments in order to promote progress at the local level.

36. The high-level event on the theme "Safe and sustainable cities", organized by UN-Women, demonstrated the relevance of safety in cities for women and girls. UN-Women also participated in a high-level panel discussion on the theme "Addressing crime in cities: linking the sustainable development agenda and the New Urban Agenda", advocating a holistic and comprehensive approach to crime and justice issues that integrates preventing and punishing violence against women and girls.

37. Following the Conference, UN-Women convened an expert group meeting on measuring women's representation in local government, as part of the Entity's work to develop standardized measurements for certain gender-specific Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Participants discussed the findings of research led by UN-Women on current practices and gaps in regional and global monitoring of women's representation in local government. They considered a working definition of "local government" to serve as basis for a data collection methodology and the piloting of a related data collection survey in two regions.

## **B. Migrants and refugees**

38. UN-Women seized the opportunity to contribute its extensive experience to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held on 19 September 2016. The meeting was part of a series of events expected to culminate in an intergovernmental conference in 2018. The Entity provided substantive inputs to ensure the inclusion of strong gender perspectives in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants" (A/70/59). UN-Women convened joint briefings and side events, and released joint statements with the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of

their Families, the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), urging that greater attention be focused on the gender equality dimensions of large movements of refugees and migrants. Prior to the high-level plenary, UN-Women issued a joint statement with the International Organization for Migration, calling upon Governments to reassess their national migration policies in order to ensure that they explicitly address the vulnerabilities of migrant women and girls, including their higher exposure to exploitation and violence, as well as their lack of access to sexual and reproductive health-care services.

39. During the intergovernmental negotiations on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (see General Assembly resolution 71/1), UN-Women provided normative support and substantive and technical inputs to Member States on a human rights-based and gender-responsive approach to migration and refugee policies. UN-Women effectively built on the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixtieth session and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly in which Member States had recognized the contributions of migrant women and called for their empowerment. The resulting commitments enshrined in the New York Declaration on mainstreaming a gender perspective, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, fully respecting and protecting the human rights of women and girls and combating sexual and gender-based violence against migrant and refugee women, including through the provision of access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, further solidify the normative framework for women and girls. Member States also recognized the significant contribution and leadership of women in refugee and migrant communities and committed to work to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in the development of local solutions and opportunities.

40. In 2016, UN-Women chaired the Global Migration Group, an inter-agency group that brings together 20 United Nations entities and that is the principal coordination mechanism on international migration within the United Nations system. In that capacity, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women addressed the opening of the high-level plenary meeting to convey the Group's commitment to supporting Member States in the implementation of the New York Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **C. Least developed countries**

41. The Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 gave UN-Women the opportunity to bring its operational experience to this normative process. The Entity's activities in the least developed countries, reflected in its report on gender equality and the Istanbul Programme of Action, were part of the Entity's contribution to the conduct of the review and negotiation process.

42. UN-Women issued evidence, case studies and key messages prior to the first preparatory meeting of experts. The Entity advocated sustaining the momentum to fulfil the gender equality commitments secured in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in this group of countries.

43. UN-Women presented key points for action at the thematic round table on human and social development and good governance at all levels, held as part of the Midterm Review. Furthermore, building on its operational experience in the least developed countries, UN-Women drew attention to the rights and needs of, and opportunities for, women and girls in the least developed countries at several other events, including in collaboration with entities from the United Nations system. Attention was drawn to key strategies for addressing the drivers of inequality for women and girls and for creating a conducive environment to empower women and girls in the least developed countries.

44. The systematic engagement of and normative support provided by UN-Women helped to consolidate significant gains. The Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (see General Assembly resolution 70/294, annex), includes strengthened gender perspectives in the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action and in its recommendations for future actions. The outcome document addresses the needs of women and girls in the least developed countries, particularly in the areas of agriculture, climate change, disaster risk reduction, economic empowerment, leadership and participation, education, financing and global partnership, and poverty and productive capacity-building.

#### **D. HIV and AIDS**

45. UN-Women, in partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), provided normative support during the preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the political declarations on HIV and AIDS. UN-Women provided substantive and technical inputs to the draft outcome document and during the negotiation process in an effort to promote and strengthen commitments on addressing the needs of women and girls in the context of HIV and AIDS. This effort drew on the substantive and operational experience of UN-Women and the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in this area.

46. In General Assembly resolution 70/266, entitled “Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast Track to Accelerating the Fight against HIV and to Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030”, Member States committed to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls as part of the ongoing efforts to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 and included a specific target to reduce new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women. Member States were called upon to implement gender-responsive national strategic plans on HIV, including through promoting women’s leadership and engagement in the AIDS response and addressing the intersections of HIV, violence against women and harmful practices. States were also called upon to promote universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the outcome documents of their review conferences.

47. During the high-level meeting, UN-Women participated in events to draw more attention to the gender dimensions of HIV and AIDS. At the panel discussion on the theme “Leaving no one behind: ending stigma and discrimination through social justice and inclusive societies”, the Entity focused on the intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality that often put women and girls at greater risk of contracting HIV. UN-Women also supported a meeting entitled “#whatwomenwant”, at which young leaders from Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean called for coordinated leadership to drive change for women and girls in the AIDS response. The young leaders emphasized the links between HIV and gender equality issues, such as child marriage and gender-based violence, and urged Member States to ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making and to promote women-centred and women-led research and innovation.

## **E. World drug problem**

48. At its seventieth session the General Assembly held a special session on the world drug problem, during which it reviewed progress in the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. In the outcome document entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem” (see General Assembly resolution S-30/1, annex), the Assembly addresses some of the specific needs of women and girls in the context of the world drug problem. Member States recognized the importance of mainstreaming gender and age perspectives in drug-related policies and programmes, stressed the importance of gender-related data and expressed their commitment to ensuring non-discriminatory access to health care for women, including detained women.

49. UN-Women supported Member States in strengthening the linkages between international drug policy and gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Entity drew attention to the links between the world drug problem and the rise in cases of femicide, sexual violence and trafficking of women and girls, as well as the higher prevalence of HIV among women who inject drugs. The Entity also voiced concern about the growing number of women imprisoned for drug-related offences, many of whom were subjected to sexual violence in prison and lacked access to sexual and reproductive health care. It called for more humane and balanced approaches to international drug control efforts that were human rights-based, gender-responsive and that emphasized public health.

50. During the special session, UN-Women highlighted the particular needs of women and girls through its participation in the round table on the theme “Cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities” and a number of side events. UN-Women highlighted the clear gender differences in the causes and consequences of women’s involvement with drugs, including severe criminal penalties that were disproportionate to the severity of their offences. The Entity identified an urgent need to improve the understanding of the impact of drug policies on women and their families and called for all responses to the world drug problem to include women’s leadership and their full, equal and effective participation in prevention, harm reduction and all other responses and interventions.

## F. Climate change

51. The sustained normative support provided by UN-Women in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change contributed to the achievement of a historic milestone in December 2015, when, for the first time, parties to the Convention committed to a treaty on climate change. They undertook to respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, as well as on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Paris Agreement also provides for gender-responsive adaptation action and capacity-building activities. Galvanized by this achievement, the Entity redoubled its efforts to ensure the gender-responsive implementation of the Paris Agreement and to encourage gender-responsive climate action at all levels.

52. In 2016, the Entity contributed to the further implementation of the Lima work programme on gender (FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.3, decision 18/CP.20) by providing recommendations and participating in an in-session workshop on gender-responsive adaptation, capacity-building and training for women delegates of State parties to the Convention. The Entity also organized a series of knowledge-exchange dialogues with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and select implementing agencies on gender mainstreaming in the Convention process. Participants identified entry points for integrating a gender perspective into the various thematic work areas of the Convention and into the implementation of decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

53. As the two-year Lima work programme on gender concluded at the end of 2016, UN-Women offered its expertise to the parties to the Convention in the preparation of a successor work programme on gender. This included substantive and technical support to the parties and close collaboration with the secretariat on elements for a draft decision on an enhanced work programme on gender. In the resulting decision on gender and climate change, the Conference of the Parties outlines concrete actions to operationalize gender-responsive climate policies and actions and establishes a set of measures to mainstream a gender perspective in all areas of its work. The decision further provides for the development of a gender action plan to ensure the implementation of existing gender equality commitments in the various work areas of the Convention process. It also sets out measures to achieve the goal of gender balance and enhance women's participation, including at the grass-roots level, and engagement in the Convention process, thereby placing the Convention process at the leading edge with regard to women's participation in global intergovernmental processes.

54. At the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in November 2016, UN-Women raised the visibility of gender equality and women's empowerment by facilitating the participation, engagement and activities of gender equality advocates and climate experts in Governments and civil society, and women innovators in Convention-related processes and events. Specifically, it provided support for the Innovation Forum of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance and continued to support the capacity-building and outreach efforts of the Women and Gender Constituency. The Entity provided on-site normative support for and substantive inputs to negotiations, drawing on its experience and benefitting from its operational work in this area. UN-Women also took the opportunity to showcase its flagship programming initiatives, which

address such issues as climate-resilient agriculture and the gender inequality of risk. The initiatives aim to leverage the mutual benefits of gender equality and climate action for sustainable development.

55. The Entity expanded its substantive contributions to the process. This included sharing key messages with the Parties to inform the negotiations on the decision on gender and climate change. In collaboration with the Mary Robinson Foundation-Climate Justice, the Entity issued the second edition of a research report on improving women's participation in the Convention process entitled "The full view: ensuring a comprehensive approach to achieve the goal of gender balance in the UNFCCC process". Its recommendations, addressed to different stakeholders, identify steps to realize the goal of gender balance, including by setting concrete incremental targets with specific time frames for the participation of women, instituting temporary special measures, expanding leadership opportunities for women in existing bodies and allocating resources to fund the participation of women delegates of State parties to the Convention. The report also contains recommendations on the systemic integration of a gender perspective into the Convention process, including the development of a gender policy and gender action plan identifying priority result areas, key activities, indicators of success for each result area, specific timelines and responsible actors.

## **G. Human rights**

56. UN-Women provided normative support in relation to the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, promoting the reflection of a gender perspective, including by supporting Member States in preparing for the universal periodic review, assisting with the preparation of reports by stakeholders, contributing to United Nations country team reports, making interventions at meetings of the Council on the universal periodic review and supporting the implementation of recommendations. UN-Women is continuing to expand its collaboration with other mechanisms of the Council, such as the special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The Entity continued to ensure that all Council-mandated commissions of inquiry and, increasingly, all fact-finding and expert missions have the required gender expertise to fulfil their mandates. In 2016, this included providing sexual and gender-based crime investigators for the commissions of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, fact-finding missions in Libya and South Sudan, the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan and expert missions in Burundi and Myanmar.

57. In coordination with OHCHR, UN-Women continued to support the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in all regions. Support was provided to States parties for reporting under the Convention, preparing for the constructive dialogue with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and in connection with the preparation of shadow reports by civil society organizations and reports by United Nations country teams submitted to the Committee. Through its programme work, UN-Women further expanded its support for implementation of and follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations, including the reflection of Committee recommendations in national laws, policies and programmes.



58. The support provided by UN-Women to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in the development of general recommendations included work on access to justice, violence against women and rural women. UN-Women, in partnership with OHCHR, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, prepared a practitioner's manual on women's access to justice, which incorporates general recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice ([CEDAW/C/GC/33](#)).

59. UN-Women co-organized side events during the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the universal periodic review on the protection of the labour and human rights of women migrant workers, with the involvement of members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. UN-Women continued to support initiatives highlighting the situation of women and girls with disabilities in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It addressed the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and provided inputs to inform its work on general comment No. 3 on women and girls with disabilities. UN-Women participated in an event during the ninth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

#### **IV. UN-Women support for the implementation of policy guidance**

60. UN-Women continued to consolidate the linkages between its normative support function and its operational activities with a view to strengthening the implementation of global normative frameworks on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. An example of this effort was its support for the implementation of the agreed conclusions and other outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Entity's operational work was informed by the political declaration adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 2015, especially by its six implementation strategies (see para. 6 of the political declaration): (a) strengthened implementation of laws, policies, strategies and programme activities; (b) strengthened and increased support for institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; (c) the transformation of discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes; (d) significantly increased investment to close resource gaps, including through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources; (e) strengthened accountability for the implementation of existing commitments; and (f) enhanced capacity-building, data collection, monitoring and evaluation, and access to and use of information and communications technologies.

61. In Brazil, UN-Women provided technical support to the Ministry of Women, Racial Equality and Human Rights to strengthen the implementation of the third National Plan of Policies for Women. This included support for the preparatory process for the National Conference of Policies for Women, which led to the adoption of a set of priorities and recommendations that shaped the National Gender Strategy in 2016.

62. In Turkmenistan, UN-Women promoted renewed commitment to implement existing national policies and legislation on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through dialogues with leaders of public organizations and members of municipal bodies. Following the dialogues, stakeholders proposed initiatives to promote gender equality by creating a local commission, organizing meetings with the parliament and providing training to government institutions in that regard.

63. As part of a joint United Nations effort, UN-Women supported the reform of the national institutional mechanism for gender equality and the empowerment of women in Georgia. UN-Women, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, prepared technical proposals that were in line with the Beijing Platform for Action. The support was provided in response to the commitment made by the Prime Minister of Georgia at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Empowerment, co-organized by UN-Women in 2015, to enhance institutional mechanisms for gender equality by creating an interministerial commission on gender equality.

64. UN-Women supported the strengthening of national institutional mechanisms for gender equality by promoting closer cooperation between national mechanisms and women's civil society organizations. In Iraq, the Entity engaged closely with government officials, women's civil society organizations and gender equality advocates to set up the Iraqi Women Initiative. The Initiative proposed a common set of priorities on issues relating to reconciliation, women's political participation and countering radicalization and violent extremism.

65. With a view to transforming discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes, UN-Women provided technical support to the National Centre for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention of China and the Shenzhen Centre for Disease Control and Prevention to develop and implement training programmes for health-care providers on women's access to health-care services, with a particular focus on addressing the stigma and discrimination faced by women living with HIV and AIDS.

66. UN-Women supported Governments in strengthening accountability for gender-responsive budgeting. In Afghanistan, UN-Women offered technical support on the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting in development policies, which contributed to the launch, by the Ministry of Finance, of a national strategy on gender-responsive budgeting. In Rwanda, UN-Women provided technical support to the Gender Monitoring Office in the formulation of a monitoring and evaluation plan for gender equality to help the Office assess the quality of the gender-responsive budgeting approaches implemented by government agencies. To further promote accountability for gender-responsive budgeting, UN-Women has supported the Gender Monitoring Office in training parliamentarians in gender analysis, planning and budgeting to build their capacities for assessing gender-budgeting statements.

67. During the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, UN-Women was instrumental in supporting the development of capacity-building initiatives for national women's groups. The initiatives focused on scaling up prevention efforts in rural Liberia, including contact tracing, reporting and follow-up with Ebola survivors. UN-Women also collaborated with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services to undertake research on the socioeconomic impact of Ebola on women and girls in Liberia.

68. In an effort to address existing gaps in the availability of quality gender data and evidence, UN-Women facilitated initiatives aimed at institutionalizing data collection and availability mechanisms in Kenya. UN-Women provided technical and financial assistance for the finalization of local- and municipal-level indicators that include a gender perspective in order to enable those implementing local programmes to track gender-related targets. In Colombia, UN-Women, in collaboration with the National Civil Registry, the National Electoral Council and the United Nations Development Programme, supported the collection of sex-disaggregated data following the 2015 local elections. By collecting such data political parties in Colombia will be better positioned to promote the political participation of women.

## V. Conclusions

69. In 2016, the international community further consolidated its comprehensive, universal and transformative compact for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Gender equality objectives are now more systematically prioritized and mainstreamed in the work relating to the three pillars of the United Nations and the three dimensions of sustainable development. UN-Women will continue to support the full, effective and accelerated implementation of those objectives, in fulfilment of the central role assigned to the Entity in this regard by Member States.

70. UN-Women provided normative support to Member States to strengthen gender perspectives in intergovernmental normative frameworks through the provision of evidence and strengthening of the knowledge base, advocacy and outreach, awareness-raising, partnership-building and by bringing together stakeholders to strategize on advancing common objectives. UN-Women also further enhanced its integrated approach to and built synergies between its normative support and coordination functions and its operational activities at all levels. As a result, through its presence at the country level, the Entity provided more effective support for the national implementation of commitments in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the Entity's flagship programming initiatives have created further opportunities for multi-stakeholder collaboration in advancing gender equality objectives. This work has been carried out despite the continued under-resourcing of the Entity's normative support function and its reliance on voluntary contributions to advance the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective with a view to fulfilling the commitments of the 2030 Agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action.

71. UN-Women made great strides in leveraging the transformative and comprehensive commitments undertaken in 2015 on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The Entity supported the Commission on the Status of Women in establishing a road map for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and subsequently put the agreed conclusions to effective use in support of the work of Member States in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, including the high-level political forum. UN-Women successfully engaged with Member States in intergovernmental processes that have traditionally paid less attention to the integration of gender perspectives, including those on disarmament, drug policy and crime prevention and criminal justice.

72. In 2017, UN-Women will fully support Member States in the formulation, implementation and follow-up of normative frameworks. In addition to continuing to support Member States in the follow-up processes to outcomes such as the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement, UN-Women will place priority on working towards a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. It will continue to support the implementation of and follow-up to the key intergovernmental outcomes of 2016, such as the New Urban Agenda, including through United Nations system-wide coordination. The Entity will also continue to support Member States at the national level in integrating gender equality commitments into national plans on sustainable development and strategic plans on HIV and AIDS, as well as promote the implementation of gender equality commitments by the least developed countries and small island developing States.

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