



Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Organizational matters

Report on the second regular session 2019, 9 to 10 September 2019

I. Organizational matters

1. The second regular session 2019 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 9 to 10 September 2019.
2. The Executive Board elected Susan Mwangi (Kenya) to the Bureau as Vice-President, representing the African States until the end of 2019, to replace former Vice-President, Koki Muli Grignon, Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, subsequent to the recent conclusion of her tenure in New York.
3. The Executive Board adopted the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the second regular session ([UNW/2019/L.4](#)), and approved the report on its annual session, held from 18 to 20 June 2019 ([UNW/2019/5](#)). The Executive Board also approved the proposed provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session of 2020, to be held on 14 February (see annex I), and discussed the draft annual workplan for 2019, in preparation for its adoption at the first regular session of 2020.
4. The Executive Board adopted four decisions: [2019/10](#) – Integrated budget estimates for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the biennium 2020–2021; [2019/11](#) – structured dialogue on financing the gender equality and women’s empowerment results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2018–2021; [2019/12](#) – Joint review of the existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs; and [2019/13](#) – Working Methods of the Executive Board, as contained in Annex II of the present report.

II. Opening statements

5. The Vice-President of the Executive Board, Katalin Annamária Bogyay, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations, officially opened the session on behalf of the President of the Executive Board, Pennelope Beckles, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations.



6. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka conveyed her condolences to all who were affected by Hurricane Dorian, in the Bahamas and elsewhere. This was a harsh reminder of the urgency of the upcoming Climate Summit scheduled for the latter half of the month of September 2019.

7. She welcomed the newly elected representative for the African States to the Bureau and thanked the former Vice-President for her dedication. As this was the last official session to be presided over by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, the head of UN-Women conveyed her gratitude for the President's invaluable advice and support throughout her tenure. Alluding to UN-Women's recent event attended by 45 women Permanent Representatives based in New York, she applauded the increasing trend of women in senior leadership at the United Nations.

8. She also extended her gratitude to the Bureau members for their tireless work throughout the year, facilitating decisions, chairing meetings and encouraging dialogue between UN-Women and Member States.

9. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director informed the Executive Board of the following new appointed officials: Daniel Seymour, Director of the Strategic Partnership Division; Sabine Freizer, Chief of the Leadership and Governance Section; and Sarah Hendriks, expected to assume her role as Director of the Policy and Programme Division in October 2019.

10. The years 2019 and 2020 marked a period of strategic adjustments for UN-Women, which included aligning with the United Nations reform processes and the undergoing UN-Women change management process. In addition, UN-Women had a critical role to play in evaluating the progress made in the 25 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were adopted, with a massive intergenerational mobilization campaign under the theme "Generation Equality".

11. She welcomed Member States' efforts to produce comprehensive national reviews and urged those that had not submitted theirs to do so. She explained that regional and country offices were supporting comprehensive, multi-stakeholder preparations at the national and regional levels, and that regional commissions were conducting regional reviews. These reviews would serve as the basis for the Secretary-General's report to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and guide discussions at its sixty-fourth session on ways to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

12. In addition, these reviews would provide vital information on the barriers that continue to hinder gender equality and promising opportunities, therefore enabling the formation of Action Coalitions to address these issues at a large scale. These coalitions were expected to be launched at the Generation Equality Forum from 7 to 8 May in Mexico, and to culminate in France from 7 to 10 July 2020.

13. Turning to the subject of resource mobilization, she sought the Executive Board's support to meet the revenue projections proposed in the institutional budget for 2020–2021, and to provide the necessary support and leadership for its effective implementation. UN-Women had seen a modest but positive momentum over the past year. The 2019 report on the structured dialogue on financing ([UNW/2019/8](#)) revealed that in 2018, UN-Women achieved its highest revenue to date of \$404.7 million, which represented an increase of 7 per cent over 2017. This growth was primarily driven by an increase in other resources (9.8 per cent), while regular resources grew by nearly 2 per cent in a climate where other entities were experiencing decreases.

14. There was also improvement in the predictability of resources, tracked through an increasing share of multi-year agreements. Twenty-nine countries made multi-year

commitments, with Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom committing more than \$15 million a year. UN-Women appreciated partners' confidence in its work, as confirmed by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). In addition, UN-Women reached its non-core target in 2019, particularly due to contributions from the European Union.

15. Acknowledging a current funding gap of \$7 million for 2019, as well as a shortfall of \$56 million of the \$200 million endorsed by the Executive Board in the Integrated Results and Resources Framework, the head of UN-Women called upon Member States for support through increased contributions of regular resources. Regular resources were critical to UN-Women's ability to implement its strategic plan and United Nations development system reform, as well as to leverage the mobilization potential of the 25-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+25). Several governments, including France, Germany and Luxembourg, were appreciated for their increase in regular resource contributions in 2019.

16. Speaking on the meta-analysis of evaluations conducted in 2018, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director underscored the need to protect and maintain policy gains, stating that UN-Women was committed to use the recommendations to further enhance results-based management.

17. The findings and recommendations of the corporate evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to humanitarian action acknowledged the Entity's good positioning in this area and its active engagement in all workstreams in terms of United Nations reforms, to ensure alignment of its approaches and to position gender equality and women's empowerment at the centre of the reform.

18. Expanding on the UN-Women change management process, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director stressed that the results of the changes would be a strengthened field presence, a more systematic approach to determining where the Entity is present and innovative ways to engage with United Nations Country Teams and international and national partners.

19. The Executive Board was reminded of the upcoming 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, which was scheduled to take place from 25 November 2019.

20. Member States underlined the leading role of UN-Women in championing gender equality around the world and stressed the importance of the sustainability and predictability of resources for the Entity. Several statements highlighted the need to enhance transparency and accountability of resource use in alignment with the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and the United Nations system reform, as well as to strengthen inter-agency coordination and funding arrangements.

III. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

21. The Deputy Executive Director for Resource Management, Sustainability and Partnerships officially assumed her new role in August 2019. She noted that her tenure was beginning at a time when UN-Women must deliver results on Beijing+25 and the United Nations development system reform now more than ever and looked forward to working with the Executive Board to ensure the realization of those results.

22. She emphasized that UN-Women was focusing on the sustainability of its positive impact on the peoples and countries it served. The sustainability of financial resources and more importantly, human resources, were therefore the Entity's most valued assets.

23. In 2018, UN-Women recorded its highest income and level of programme delivery since its inception, demonstrating not only the Entity's growing operational capacity, but also its ability to grow. UN-Women is keen to partner with Executive Board Members to enhance the predictability, flexibility and alignment of financial resources for the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

24. She stated that the resource projections proposed for 2020–2021, though challenging to meet, were achievable and critical for the delivery of mandated activities. As part of ongoing efforts to deepen and diversify its partnerships, the Entity had made progress in engaging with the private sector and individual donors. The structured dialogue on financing was an opportunity to regularly engage with Member States on ensuring full resourcing of the results of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

25. With respect to the United Nations development system reform, particularly the revitalized Resident Coordinator system and the new Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, she opined that this presented a significant opportunity for delivering improved results on gender equality across the United Nations system. In addition, the onus was on UN-Women to ensure that this opportunity was realized.

26. The Director for Management and Administration presented the report on integrated budget estimates for the biennium 2020–2021 and the management response to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The integrated budget reflected the projected financial resources that would allow UN-Women to have the financial and institutional capacity to implement its mandate, in line with the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and covered regular and other resources.

27. The estimated resources were presented in line with the harmonized approach agreed upon by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UN-Women. To deliver on its commitments during the last two years of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, UN-Women proposed the adoption of an integrated budget, with estimated voluntary contributions of \$970 million for 2020–2021 and requested an institutional budget appropriation of \$204.4 million. The proposed institutional budget reflected a cost increase of \$2.6 million in order to meet the doubling of UN-Women's contribution to the cost-sharing arrangement with the United Nations Development Group, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution [72/279](#).

28. Touching on contingency measures established with respect to regular resources, she cited the following: (a) change management implemented through scalable operations; (b) reduction of non-binding expenditures; (c) delayed recruitment; (d) increase in vacancy rates; (e) delayed spending of allocations for special purpose activities; and (f) draw on the Entity's operational reserve.

29. ACABQ recommended that the Executive Board approve the institutional component of the integrated budget estimates of UN-Women for 2020–2021 in the amount of \$204.4 million, including \$37.3 million for cost recovery from other resources.

30. UN-Women took note of the recommendations and outlined plans scheduled for 2020 and 2021 on deepening engagement with Government and intergovernmental partners in line with its Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy; on seeking to diversify its funding sources by focusing on private sector investments, particularly unrestricted regular resources from individual donors through a strengthened network of national committees, as well as on leveraging efficient inter-agency and agency-specific pooled funding mechanisms; and on leveraging movements, events, advocacy campaigns and appeals to make a stronger case for support for the work of the United Nations and partners on gender equality, including the work of UN-Women.

31. Interventions from the floor revealed some concern that the institutional budget for 2018–2019 had not been fully financed, yet the budget for the next biennium was being expanded. It was thought that a focus on resource mobilization efforts could put programme delivery and other activities at risk. Concern was also expressed with respect to the decreasing share of regular resources. Member States called for flexible and predictable funding from countries as per the Funding Compact and for greater transparency and accountability from UN-Women in order to have a fully financed budget.

IV. Structured dialogue on financing

32. The ongoing structured dialogue on financing supports organizational effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The overarching objective of the dialogue was to ensure that the integrated budgets of UN-Women for the biennia 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 were fully financed in support of the comprehensive implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

33. It was concluded that UN-Women and Member States should work together to ensure that the Entity was adequately resourced and positioned to implement United Nations reforms and meet growing demands worldwide, especially given that gender equality and the empowerment of women is under-resourced in the multilateral development context.

34. Member States expressed support for the proposal to establish thematic funding windows and requested further information on funding gaps. One speaker reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to prioritize core funding for UN-Women and supporting themes that were strongly linked to the Entity's mandate and expertise but that lacked adequate funding, such as violence against women and girls, women's political participation and women, peace and security.

35. A delegation requested UN-Women to use the strategic plan results framework to identify funding gaps and report back to the Executive Board. Agreeing with this request, another speaker asked for more detail on what the funding gaps were in absolute numbers and how these gaps could be resolved together with Member States.

36. In support of an increase in assessed contributions to UN-Women, one Member State asked for an estimate of assessed contributions needed to fulfil the Entity's normative mandate that could feed into potential talking points to the Fifth Committee. The speaker further highlighted its strategic partnership framework with UN-Women as a great experience and encouraged other donors to contribute.

37. A delegation expressed its reservations regarding the Entity's focus on individual donors, while another requested updates on ongoing efforts to raise core funds, including from the private sector.

38. The Australian National Committee in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), was invited by the Executive Board to deliver a statement. Speaking of the unique role of national committees to reach the general public and engage with national and corporate partners to raise funds, the representative highlighted the French National Committee's role in liaising between UN-Women and the French Government for the Beijing+25 Generation Equality Forum.

V. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279

39. The Executive Board heard a joint presentation by the acting Programme Division Director and the Senior Adviser on Change Management. UN-Women focused on four areas since June 2019 to further support the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279, namely: (a) the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework; b) supporting the United Nations Resident Coordinator System; c) advancing shared funding, business operations and premises; and d) mapping regional assets and capacities.

40. The presentation also highlighted the following points:

(a) UN-Women was actively engaged in the United Nations development system process to position gender equality and the empowerment of women at the heart of the reform and has been a strong advocate for bold changes.

(b) A strong, coherent and coordinated United Nations development system would be better equipped to support Member States in achieving better results on gender equality and the empowerment of women, towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(c) UN-Women was in the process of updating its policies, procedures and guidance to align with the outcomes of the United Nations development system reform and building staff capacity for implementation.

(d) UN-Women's change management exercise was aligned with the United Nations development system reform and would strengthen the Entity's capacity to deliver results for women and girls.

41. The Change Management Adviser explained that the change management exercise was a collective UN-Women-wide endeavour, undertaken in an effort to be even more effective over the next decade by ensuring adequate staff, processes and structures to partner with United Nations entities, governments and other organizations in order to drive its mandate. The outcomes included: (a) optimizing the field architecture; (b) optimizing the headquarters structure; and (c) enhancing processes.

42. The United Nations reform presented an opportunity for UN-Women to focus greater attention on gender equality and women's empowerment within the work of the United Nations system, as well as to strengthen its own ways of working and improve the delivery of its mandate in an integrated manner. UN-Women works towards clarifying its operating model and adjusting its country typology/presence and headquarters structure to strengthen its ability to deliver sustainable results.

43. Through a joint statement, several countries welcomed steps taken by UN-Women since the Annual Session of the Executive Board to implement the United Nations development system reform as part of wider efforts, notably the completion of new guidance for the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).¹ UN-Women was congratulated by one delegation for proactively engaging with Resident Coordinators on gender parity and welcomed the secondment of policy experts to Resident Coordinators' offices.

44. Delegations commended UN-Women for steps taken to follow up on commitments made with respect to the Funding Compact and asked how the Entity would support United Nations Country Teams in complying with related requirements. UN-Women was also commended for including a report on the status of Funding Compact commitments within the context of the structured dialogue on financing, providing a basis for annual reporting to the Executive Board.

¹ Formerly named the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

45. Concern was expressed about differences between entities in terms of Funding Compact commitments and related reporting. It was suggested that discussions on this subject be convened at the next session of the Executive Board. Another speaker requested a baseline that would indicate where UN-Women was as regards Funding Compact commitments for February 2020.

46. Member States welcomed the update on the UN-Women change management process. A speaker asked for clarification on the linkage between the United Nations development system reform and the UN-Women change management exercise, while another asked how multi-country offices will be impacted by the change management process given their unique structure.

47. UN-Women management responded by underscoring the Entity's engagement in the United Nations development system reform at the inter-agency level. The alignment of UN-Women's strategic notes documents with the cooperation framework was an opportunity to anchor its normative agenda within this structure. UN-Women would continue to support United Nations Country Teams through the UNCT-SWAP Scorecard for ensuring accountability of senior managers and improving United Nations Country Teams' efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into their work.

48. All proposed changes must be aligned with the United Nations development system reform. UN-Women will need to be strategic in the change management analysis to ensure that the reform reflects gender mainstreaming.

VI. Update on the working methods of the Executive Boards

49. The Secretary of the Executive Board presented an overview of the update on the working methods of the Executive Boards. A paper was presented jointly by the Executive Board Secretariats of UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UNICEF and UN-Women in response to their corresponding Executive Board decisions on working methods, adopted at each respective Board's annual session 2019. For UN-Women, this was in accordance with Executive Board decision [2019/8](#), (decision [2019/16](#) for UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, and decision [2019/9](#) for UNICEF). These decisions included the following three requests to be presented at the second regular session of the Executive Board 2019:

(a) Present initial proposals to improve the working methods of the Joint Meeting of the Boards, including an optimal time to convene the meeting.

(b) Propose different alternatives of adjusting the date of the second regular session, ensuring that it does not overlap with other schedules.

(c) Propose practical proposals for improving the efficiency of the Executive Board's sessions, including reviews of agenda items and the efficient consideration of these.

50. The respective responses and proposals were outlined in the joint paper made available at this session.

VII. Evaluation

A. Corporate evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to humanitarian action

51. The Executive Board heard the presentations on the corporate evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to humanitarian action and the related management

response, as well as a briefing on humanitarian action, disaster risk reduction, resilience and crisis response.

52. In outlining the key findings and recommendations of this evaluation, for the 2014–2018 period, the Chief of the Independent Evaluation Service gave an overview of the exercise which assessed the following: (a) Relevance and appropriateness of UN-Women’s humanitarian action across its tripartite mandate in addressing local needs and priorities, and increasing ownership and accountability for integrating gender considerations into humanitarian action; (b) Effectiveness and efficiency of UN-Women’s contributions in prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and resilience-building; (c) Extent to which UN-Women’s interventions are connected to longer-term development efforts and support sustainable approaches to recovery and disaster risk reduction; (d) Extent to which a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in humanitarian action areas of work.

53. The Chief of the Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response Office in Geneva delivered UN-Women’s management response. UN-Women welcomed the findings and recommendations of the corporate evaluation of UN-Women’s contribution to humanitarian action. Based on an extensive desk and portfolio review, country visits, an online survey and meetings with key stakeholders in Geneva and New York, the evaluation assessed the relevance and effectiveness of UN-Women’s contribution in line with rights-based approaches, including with the fundamental tenets that define whether equal access was made available to the means, enjoyment and protection of the rights of all from a gender equality perspective. In the humanitarian context, this relates to ensuring that the specific and differing needs of crisis-affected and at-risk women, girls, men and boys are adequately identified and addressed.

54. UN-Women agreed with the assessment of the evaluation team and welcomed the evaluation’s recognition of its pioneering and effective normative and coordination role at the global level and at key regional forums, which has resulted in the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment into frameworks and policies that guide humanitarian action. It was noted that the Entity was not a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

55. UN-Women recognized that a more focused and consistent approach was required to strengthen its contributions to humanitarian action, from emergency response to longer-term transformative change. This would require additional resources and investment in UN-Women’s humanitarian capacity to fully implement the recommendations of this evaluation, as well as to ensure that the Entity is well positioned to engage in initiatives on the links between humanitarian and development efforts in a global environment, where protracted crises are increasingly the norm in humanitarian contexts. This was in keeping with the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s New Way of Working – outlined and committed at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit – to achieve collective outcomes that reduce need, risk and vulnerability, throughout the period of protracted crises.

56. A delegation speaking on behalf of several Member States expressed strong support for the report’s findings and for a sustainable and strategic approach. UN-Women’s leadership was commended for work on gender equality issues within the Grand Bargain. It was emphasized that the Entity’s strength was in supporting United Nations organizations rather than establishing itself as a humanitarian actor. This was central to both the coordination and normative mandates and should be fully funded. UN-Women was urged to revisit its humanitarian strategy in the midterm review of the strategic plan.

57. While one Member State sought to learn more about UN-Women’s participation in the global protection cluster, another emphasized the Entity’s role in driving normative change in the humanitarian sphere, especially with the aim of expanding

the view of women as not only victims but also potential agents of change, and requested UN-Women's view on ways in which donors could provide support in this regard.

58. Other speakers raised questions related to documenting efforts made in humanitarian contexts and wanted to learn more about UN-Women's focus going forward, as well as anticipated roles at the country and global levels.

59. In response, UN-Women informed of its plan to further strengthen partnerships with other United Nations entities and the Red Cross. The process of updating the humanitarian strategy is under way and consultations with Member States have begun. The fact that UN-Women was not a member of the IASC continued to be a major obstacle to UN-Women's efforts in the humanitarian context. Member States were urged to support UN-Women's bid for membership.

60. The Executive Board was encouraged to address resource gaps, demand accountability from the humanitarian system and increase investments in capacity. It was added that donors who wished to support UN-Women's efforts for normative change in the humanitarian system could urge United Nations organizations to collaborate with UN-Women in this important area of work.

B. Meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2018

61. The Director of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services presented the meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2018. This report was the first synthesis for the current UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021 drawing on the evaluation of programmes and interventions designed and implemented during the previous UN-Women Strategic Plan 2014–2017 cycle. This meta-synthesis reviewed and aggregated insights and lessons from 39 evaluation reports against selected development and organizational effectiveness and efficiency criteria. The synthesis captured internal and external enablers that were reported to drive or impede progress.

62. Notwithstanding constraining financial and human resources, UN-Women was able to leverage its institutional expertise and integrated mandate to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Although they are not of a large scale, programmatic interventions supported by UN-Women yielded positive changes in many women's lives.

63. The overarching conclusion, as stated in the evaluation report, was that UN-Women achieved and sustained its strategic positioning across its mandate as a composite Entity, often under volatile, complex and resource-constrained settings. However, UN-Women depends on its ability to protect and sustain policy gains and to establish clear and robust policy and practice linkages to influence changes in social norms at the community, household and individual levels.

64. The Officer-in-Charge of the Programme Division presented the management perspective to the meta-analysis of UN-Women evaluations. She noted that: (a) UN-Women remained fully committed to further strengthening programme excellence through strategic planning and efficient, effective and results-based management, programme and project management, enhancing bridges between policy and programme expertise and leveraging the Programme Division's services; (b) UN-Women would continue to enhance internal synergies between the Programme Division, the Policy Division and the Management and Administration Division with a view to improving its programme design, management and impact on gender equality and women's empowerment; (c) UN-Women would continue to leverage its network of partners and its ability to engage national partners, civil society organizations and non-traditional partners to enhance programmes' sustainability and

impact; and (d) UN-Women is engaged in the repositioning of the United Nations Development System and other reforms to ensure that ongoing changes further strengthen system-wide accountability and action for gender equality and women's empowerment.

65. Delegations welcomed the update and the results achieved. A speaker asked for clarifications on how the findings of the evaluations were being used to inform the change management process. While some Member States lamented the low score in results-based management and noted the room for improvement, another welcomed the efforts to remedy problems around this issue and asked for information on when the next stocktaking was expected to take place.

66. UN-Women made note of plans to conduct an evaluation of the strategic plan in 2020, and the ongoing review of its evaluability. It was noted that the next stock-take on results-based management was expected to occur within the 2020 meta-synthesis of evaluations.

VIII. Field visits

A. Report on the joint field visit of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UN-Women and the World Food Programme (WFP)

67. The presentation was delivered by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Vanuatu to the United Nations, Sylvain Kalsakau, Rapporteur of the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS; UNICEF; UN-Women and the World Food Programme (WFP) to Colombia, which took place from 11 to 18 May 2019. The delegation comprised 22 Board members and was led by the President of the Executive Board of WFP, Hisham Mohamed Badr, the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, based in Rome.

68. As stated in the report, the purpose of the field visit was to assist the Executive Board Members in understanding the extent to and ways in which the United Nations organizations work together in partnership and collaboration through "delivering as one" and working with others, including national and subnational governments, beneficiaries, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and other development actors, to support the delivery of national development priorities, including alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

69. Based on their reflections on the effectiveness of the United Nations in Colombia, the delegation made several recommendations, recognizing that there was no one-size-fits-all approach.

70. The UN-Women representative gave an overview of the country context, highlighting key areas and opportunities in relation to UN-Women's work in Colombia. She emphasized the significance of joint programming and UN-Women's role in filling the gaps in gender equality financing. The Entity, the United Nations and the Government were fully committed to the United Nations reform, and this represented an opportunity for UN-Women to ensure that gender equality was integrated throughout the work of the United Nations system, and at the same time, to ensure that sustainable peace and humanitarian response are promoted in Colombia.

71. The Colombian delegation thanked the UN-Women's Representative in Colombia, who, he stated, worked hard to ensure concrete results on the ground. He appreciated the joint work that led to the joint visit of the Executive Boards. The cooperation had proved to bolster national efforts and underscored the importance of

the recommendations made in the report. He stressed the significance of the United Nations Country Team in “delivering as one”, not only to avoid overlap and duplication, but also to ensure the building of strong capacities at the national level. He hoped that the positive outcome of the visit would serve as an example for similar exercises in the future.

B. Report on the UN-Women Executive Board field visit to the Caribbean

72. The Representative from the Hungarian Mission, Magdolna Pongor, reported on the field visit of the UN-Women Executive Board to the Caribbean, on behalf of the delegation. The annual UN-Women field visit of the Executive Board to the Caribbean Multi-Country Office (MCO) took place from 18 to 23 May 2019. The field visit is mandated by the Executive Board decision [2017/8](#).

73. The delegation comprised the President and four Vice Presidents of the UN-Women Executive Board, and two additional Executive Board Member representatives from the Eastern European Group and the Western Europe and Others Group.

74. The purpose of the field visit was to observe how the UN-Women Caribbean MCO contributes to UN-Women’s mandate to support national development priorities and the implementation of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021 in the Caribbean subregion. The objective was to understand how the UN-Women MCO works collaboratively with the offices of the United Nations Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams in the subregion, to support and contribute to both the implementation of the subregion’s development priorities and plans and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

75. The delegation expressed its sincere gratitude to the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago for their hospitality, facilitating the visit and the opportunity to engage in fruitful discussions on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including the realization of their human rights, with Heads of State and Government, Ministers and other high-level dignitaries.

76. Recommendations for the consideration of UN-Women included the following: (a) UN-Women should improve communication on its achieved results, both externally and within benefiting communities. The Entity should seek to build a stronger relationship with the media to better highlight the challenges and solutions to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including the realization of their human rights in the Caribbean; and (b) UN-Women should expand its work in upholding the rights and addressing the needs of women and girls with disabilities, as well as those facing other multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization.

77. Representatives from the countries visited welcomed the opportunity to host the Executive Board delegation. While highlighting successful initiatives at their national levels, they underscored the unique nature of middle-income countries, such as significant inequalities; extreme weather and climate change-related events; internal displacement and high vulnerabilities to external shocks. One delegation called on UN-Women to focus on the psychological impact of the effects of climate change on the population, particularly with respect to women and girls. In addition, it was stressed that the status of “middle-income” neither equates to an end to gender inequality nor to the achievement of sustainable development. A speaker lamented

that the criteria used such as ‘per capita income’ do not always adequately reflect the development needs of middle-income countries.

IX. Policy and programme matters briefings

A. Operational response of UN-Women - the Fiji Multi-Country Office

78. The UN-Women representative from the Fiji MCO addressed the Executive Board on the Entity’s work in the region. The Fiji MCO is one of the largest UN-Women offices in the world, with 57 staff and a budget of US\$ 15.1 million in 2019. The 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) covered by the Fiji MCO differ in geography, size, history, culture, economy and political system. Geographic isolation translates to high operational costs and increased challenges in reaching the most vulnerable populations.

79. The Pacific is a region with the highest recorded prevalence of violence against women and girls in the world and the lowest levels of women in parliaments. The region is among the most vulnerable in the world to the effects of climate change, extreme weather events and natural disasters, exacerbating the situation of women and girls.

80. The Fiji MCO works to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment through four key programmatic areas: Women’s Economic Empowerment; Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; Women’s Political Empowerment and Leadership; and Gender and Protection in Humanitarian Action. Normative and intergovernmental support is mainstreamed across all pillars.

B. Twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

81. The head of UN-Women set the scene with the upcoming commemoration of several milestones in the year 2020. She reminded Member States that the Board could significantly contribute to accelerating the pace of implementation and strengthening the accountability of the gender equality agenda, particularly within the Beijing +25 review and appraisal process. While it was time to evaluate and take stock of the progress made on the implementation of commitments on gender equality and women’s rights, it should also serve as an opportunity to look at ensuring that there is no regression in the commitments made.

82. Urging governments to finalize their national reviews in a timely manner, the head of UN-Women explained that the regional commissions were leading the regional review processes that were expected to culminate in intergovernmental meetings in late October and November 2019. The outcome of the regional intergovernmental processes would inform the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, scheduled to be held from 9 to 20 March 2020.

83. Member States should provide the necessary funding and political support to secure civil society’s full participation in regional-level reviews and the sixty-fourth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Forum, and to enable them to advocate for accountability and urgent action.

84. Delegations reiterated their commitment to all the anniversaries mentioned. They congratulated the Governments of France and Mexico for their efforts towards the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of this important agenda on the promotion of gender equality across the world. A delegation requested more

information on initiatives taken to ensure the participation of men and boys, and also asked how the principle of leaving no-one behind was taken into consideration.

85. A speaker expressed the view that the outcome of the Generation Equality Forums should be ambitious, ensuring that feminist organizations take the lead on coordination, organization and decision-making. UN-Women was called upon to keep Member States regularly informed about the progress towards the Generation Equality Forum.

X. Statement from the Chair of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/ UN-Women Staff Council

86. The Chair of the Staff Council addressed the Executive Board for the first time since her appointment. Within the short time of its tenure that started in May 2019, this Council had regular exchanges with UN-Women's senior management and met on a monthly basis with the Director of Human Resources.

87. The change management process reviews all contractual modalities in UN-Women. The Entity should be adequately resourced to create fixed-term contracts for core functions. It was recommended that UN-Women should explore ways to create career progression pathways in collaboration with other United Nations entities. The Council welcomed the efforts championed by UN-Women to revise the internship policies, introduce paid internships and become an equal opportunity employer for students and early-career professionals.

88. On workplace culture, there is a need to develop and implement a clear Protocol on how to respond to and resolve informal complaints, and to prevent such issues from escalating. UN-Women was urged to enhance regular communication to the extent possible and to strengthen protection against retaliation.

89. The Staff Council looked forward to continuing the good practice of working with management and Human Resources on the change management process.

90. In a joint statement, several Member States appreciated the opportunity to engage with the Staff Council and UN-Women management as a follow-up to some of the prior discussions on workplace environment. They appreciated efforts across the United Nations system to understand the scale of workplace misconduct and the commitment to act.

91. It was noted with concern that while UN-Women's staff is generally committed to the Entity's vision, workload remains high and often exceeds staff capacity. The reliance on non-staff contracts was reiterated as a point of concern.

92. It was highlighted that the participation of all stakeholders was a key element in fostering cultural change. UN-Women was strongly urged to continue to regularly invite the Staff Council to participate in future sessions.

93. In response, the Deputy Executive Director for Resource Management, Sustainability and Partnerships underscored management's intention to hold regular meetings between the Staff Council and the Human Resources team.

94. The Director of Human Resources added that UN-Women was committed to adopting a holistic approach to workplace issues such as manager's leadership, awareness of protocols for reporting, accountability mechanisms and support to personnel. She underlined the importance of understanding "contract personnel" under various modalities with obligations and entitlements corresponding to their purpose and resources. She highlighted the introduction of parental leave to the

programme of work of the International Civil Service Commission and looked to the support of Member States for its implementation across the United Nations.

XI. Closing

95. The Secretary of the Executive Board addressed the Executive Board in response to questions posed to the Secretariat by some Member States. He stated that provided there was no objection, UN-Women would provide an update on the recommendations of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) at its Annual Session 2020. He confirmed UN-Women's status as a co-sponsor of the UNAIDS programme. This update would also represent alignment with the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and UNICEF.

96. UN-Women would provide an informal briefing on the road map on the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 at the first regular session 2020, bearing in mind that it would also be presented to the Executive Board at the Annual Session 2020. An update of the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 was scheduled to take place at the beginning of October 2019.

97. The Deputy Executive Director for Resource Management, Sustainability and Partnerships made closing remarks, thanking the President for her effective and efficient chairing of the session, the Vice Presidents, as well as all the delegations, whose interventions contributed to very rich discussions. She underscored that UN-Women continued to count on the close collaboration and support of its Executive Board as the Entity worked towards aligning and adapting to the United Nations reform process, implementing the change management exercise and pursuing the demands of the Beijing+25 anniversary campaign.

98. The President joined the Deputy Executive Director in thanking the head of UN-Women, her management team, the UN-Women workforce, the Bureau and the entire Executive Board for their constructive guidance and hard work, particularly the facilitators of the decisions and all those who worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure a successful session. She thanked the Secretary of the Executive Board and the Executive Board Secretariat team for their unwavering support throughout 2019.

99. The session was adjourned.

Annex I

Proposed provisional agenda and workplan for the First Regular Session 14 February 2020

Note by the Executive Board Secretariat

Provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters
2. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#)
3. Update on the working methods of the Executive Boards
4. Audit matters
5. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
6. Policy and programme matters
7. Other matters

Provisional workplan

<i>Day</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Subject</i>	
Friday, 14 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.		Opening of the session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women 	
		1	Organizational matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session 2020 • Adoption of the report on the second regular session 2019 	
		2	Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 	
		3	Update on the working methods of the Executive Boards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonized criteria for individual field visits in consultation with UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP 	
	1:15 p.m.–2:30 p.m.		<i>Informal consultations on draft decisions</i>	
	3 p.m.–6 p.m.	4	Audit matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the Board of Auditors on the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018 • Management responses 	
		5	Financial, budgetary and administrative matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint preliminary comprehensive proposal on the cost recovery policy 	

<i>Day</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Subject</i>
		6	Policy and programme matters <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Briefing on the operational response at the regional level
		7	Other matters
		1	Organizational matters <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of the provisional agenda and workplan for the Annual Session of 2020• Adoption of the annual workplan of 2020 Closing of the session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statements by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women and the President of the Executive Board

Annex II

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board

Decision 2019/10 – Integrated budget estimates for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the biennium 2020–2021

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the UN-Women integrated budget estimates for 2020–2021 which cover all cost categories and funding sources (both regular and other resources) within a single, consolidated proposal to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021;
2. *Notes with appreciation* the inclusion of separate budget lines for the independent internal audit and the evaluation office;
3. *Recalls* resolution [72/279](#) which recognizes the need to address the imbalance between core and non-core resources (regular and other resources), and notes in this regard the declining proportion of UN-Women’s regular resources;
4. *Requests* UN-Women to set realistic targets for resource mobilization;
5. *Approves* institutional budget resources in the amount of \$204.4 million to support organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and notes that these estimates include an amount of \$37.3 million for cost recovery from other resources;
6. *Notes* that in the event that actual cost recovery is higher than the estimates included in the budget proposal, the additional amount may be used for management activities to allow more regular resources to be used for programme activities; *requests* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on its utilization in the context of the next budget proposal; and asks UN-Women to further strive for an overall reduction of the ratio of its management costs;
7. *Takes note* of the related Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) ([UNW/2019/7](#)) and the recommendations contained therein, as well as the related response of UN-Women to the ACABQ Report;
8. *Requests* UN-Women in this regard to include information in the integrated budget estimates for 2022–2023 on the following recommendations:
 - a) continue to review its overall staffing structure and ensure that its staff levels are commensurate with the mandated tasks entrusted to the entity; and prioritize addressing the current trend regarding the increase in UN-Women non-staff personnel both in headquarters and in the field;
 - b) keep under review the distribution of posts between headquarters and field locations and adjust those as necessary to ensure that the distribution is based on a thorough analysis of UN-Women’s mandate and functions, and also provide information on the roles of UN-Women personnel at headquarters and in field locations;
 - c) continue to improve gender balance and work towards equitable geographical distribution of UN-Women’s staff members;
9. *Recalls* the General Assembly resolution [A/RES/64/289](#) whereby Member States agreed “that the resources required to service the normative intergovernmental processes shall be funded from the regular budget and approved by the General Assembly; the resources required to service the operational intergovernmental

processes and operational activities at all levels shall be funded from voluntary contributions and approved by the Executive Board”;

10. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to present a comprehensive update of change management initiatives under way, including related resource implications aimed at increasing effectiveness and efficiency, in the integrated budget estimates for 2022–2023.

2019/11

Structured dialogue on financing the gender equality and women’s empowerment results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note of* the report [UNW/2019/8](#) and encourages UN-Women to continue engaging in a structured dialogue with all Member States throughout the year, with a view to tracking, assessing and following up on the level of funding it receives in comparison to the approved integrated budget, as well as the predictability, flexibility and alignment of the financial resources provided for the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021;

2. *Requests* UN-Women to continue its efforts to improve its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability and, in this regard, to continue to provide information on its programme activities, within the proceedings of the Executive Board;

3. *Encourages* all Member States in a position to do so, to increase their voluntary contributions to UN-Women, especially to its regular resources, and to prioritize flexible and timely resources aligned with the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and, if possible, through multi-year commitments;

4. *Recalls* decision [2016/4](#), paragraph 10 and encourages UN-Women to continue to strengthen its efforts to diversify its funding base, including with the private sector and other stakeholders, to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021;

5. *Encourages* UN-Women to continue playing a central role in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, including in funding mechanisms, such as pooled funding;

6. *Takes note of* UN-Women’s intention to establish thematic funding windows in alignment with the Funding Compact, the preferential cost recovery inter-agency policy and a harmonized approach with other United Nations funds and programmes; and requests UN-Women to provide further analysis of and information on specific plans in this regard within the structured dialogue on financing, taking into consideration lessons learned from other funds and programmes and UN-Women’s mandate as a composite Entity;

7. *Welcomes* steps taken by UN-Women, in collaboration with United Nations Development System (UNDS) entities and Member States, to follow up on commitments of the Funding Compact; and encourages UN-Women to continue dialogue with all UNDS entities and Member States to jointly make progress towards compliance with their mutual and interdependent Funding Compact commitments;

8. *Requests* UN-Women, as part of its reports on structured dialogue on financing, to present harmonized annual reporting on implementation of its entity-specific commitments and contribution to the collective commitments of the Funding Compact, including adding annual milestones, examples of country-level impact and a

forward-looking narrative outlining intended progress for those milestones not yet realized, ahead of the second regular session 2020 of the UN-Women Executive Board;

9. *Requests* UN-Women to further review the format and content of the report on the Structured Dialogue on Financing with a view to aligning resources, including programmatic, with expected results as set out in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, taking into account annual information on regular and other resources, financial gaps and projections as it relates to specific organizational or programmatic objectives and results, as well as proposed solutions, and to present by the first regular session of 2020, options on improving the quality of the structured dialogue on financing.

2019/12

Joint review of the existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the analysis contained in the joint review of the existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs ([DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2019/1](#));

2. *Reiterates* decision [2018/6](#) and paragraph 35 of resolution [71/243](#) on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System;

3. *Endorses* recommendations 1 and 2 for further alignment contained in the present report for effective application in their integrated budgets, beginning in 2022, and requests UN-Women, working with UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UNICEF, to implement standardized terminology and formatting of integrated budget proposals and financial information in the annual reports, recognizing that while all cost categories and functional clusters will be shown, not all will apply;

4. *Takes note* of recommendation 3, which proposes the creation of separate cost classification line items in the integrated resources plan, to report on and obtain separate appropriations for independent oversight and assurance activities, as well as Resident Coordinator cost-sharing contributions, and *welcomes* additional information on this at the first regular session 2020, that enables further analysis prior to potential adoption of this recommendation.

2019/13

Working methods of the Executive Board

The Executive Board,

1. *Welcomes* the joint response prepared by the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women);

2. *Requests* the Secretariat of the Executive Board of UN-Women, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and UNICEF, to present to the Executive Board for deliberation and consideration at the first regular session 2020 an exemplary annual programme of work, including informal briefings, for each of the three options presented in the joint response, with corresponding explanatory narratives on the envisaged changes and their expected effect on Board oversight, effectiveness and efficiency, as well as further elaboration on the listed issues of joint relevance and interest to all Boards.