



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

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**Annual report of the Executive Director**

## **Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, including the midterm review of the Strategic Plan**

### *Summary*

The 2019 combined Executive Director's annual report and midterm review of the Strategic Plan describes results achieved by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in the first two years of implementing the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The report reflects on progress to date, challenges and opportunities, and possible implications emerging from the changing development context, including the 25-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action, the reforms of the United Nations system and the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs.

Overall, the midterm review confirms the relevance and effectiveness of the Entity's Strategic Plan. It identified the need to strengthen programmatic focus, including by creating standardized products and approaches, and better leverage United Nations system coordination and partnerships, particularly in the next Strategic Plan.

A draft decision is included in section VI.



## I. Introduction

1. UN-Women achieved positive results overall in 2019, the second year of its Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The Entity supported 122 countries and territories, including high-income countries. It achieved good performance for 72 per cent of all assessable Strategic Plan indicators, including 74 per cent of development results milestones at the output level. At the mid-point of the Strategic Plan, the midterm review reveals strong performance going into the last two years of implementation, with minor adjustments proposed to a subset of indicators to enhance measurability, recalibrate levels of ambition and increase the rigour of reporting.

2. With the COVID-19 pandemic hitting the world and bringing unprecedented changes, 2020 will require UN-Women to adjust activities to ensure they are relevant to the context and challenges, especially the pandemic's impact on women and girls, and to safeguard and secure hard-won development gains for women and girls.

3. In 2019, momentum for gender equality and women's empowerment intensified. Unabated global activism by women's movements produced concrete victories for women and girls. Important normative milestones included the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), adopted by the International Labour Organization – an important step after several years of mobilization. In Algeria, Ecuador, South Africa, Sudan and elsewhere, women and youth led successful protests against gender-based discrimination and inequality. They demanded an end to femicide and gender-based violence; advocated for changes to discriminatory laws, including to ban child marriage; demanded economic justice; and galvanized the world around environmental action. Women, especially young women, ran for elected office in record numbers, changing the face of parliaments in several countries. Six new women Heads of State and Government brought the global total to 22.

4. Ahead of the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+25) in 2020, UN-Women supported Beijing+25 review reports in 118 countries. Many reports highlighted how women's collective mobilization has successfully propelled heightened accountability and action to realize women's rights. They also noted faltering progress due to rampant inequality; climate change; the continued complexity, violence and protracted nature of conflicts and humanitarian crises; a pushback against women's rights, including against sexual and reproductive health and rights; and shrinking space for civil society.

5. UN-Women made significant progress in 2019 towards delivering more impactful results through a repositioned United Nations development system. It continued its change management process to become a more effective and efficient organization. Key decisions included the review of UN-Women's field footprint to align with available resources. At headquarters, the portfolios of the Deputy Executive Directors were reviewed and adjustments made to break silos and reinforce UN-Women's ability to leverage its triple mandate in an integrated manner. UN-Women started decentralizing some functions, such as the Human Resource Business Partners, for all regions. These efforts continue in 2020 to solidify and optimize changes backing better results.

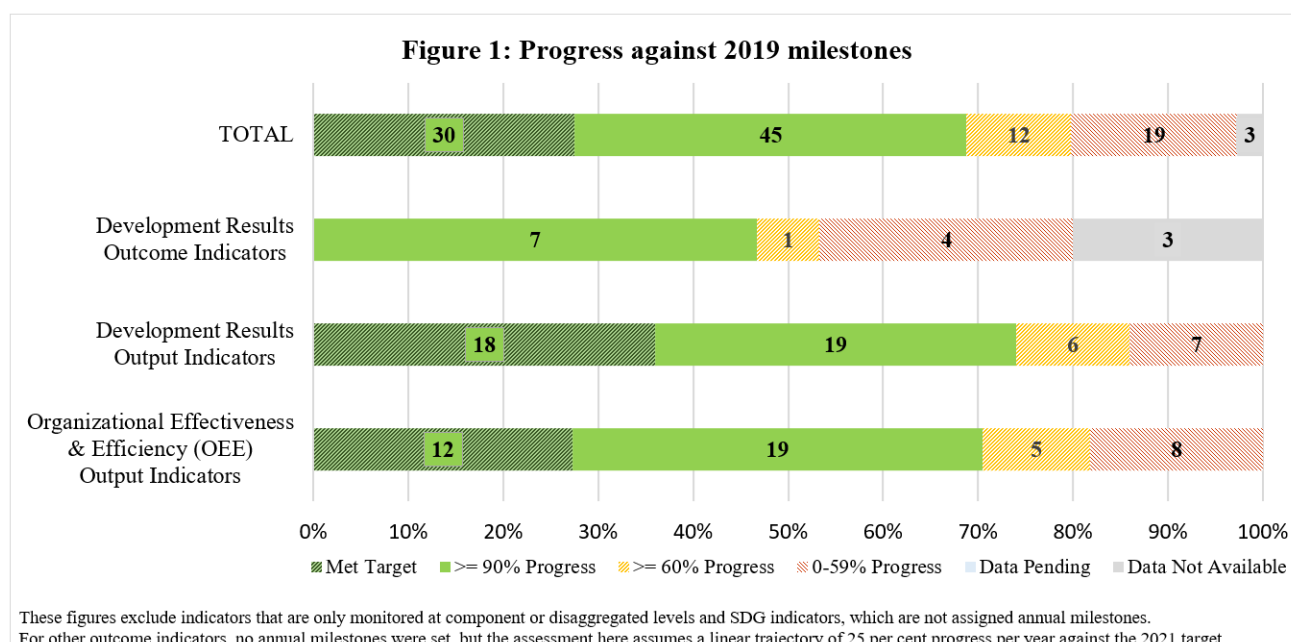
6. For the first time, UN-Women exceeded the \$500 million in revenues mark originally set for the Entity. Growth was driven by increased earmarked contributions. Greater efforts are required to grow regular resources, which slightly declined in 2019, even as they represent the bedrock for the organization to fully deliver on its mandate.

7. UN-Women laid the foundations for 2020 as a critical year to mobilize commitment and accelerate action on gender equality. In addition to the

intergovernmental processes marking Beijing+25, the Entity launched *Generation Equality*, an innovative multi-stakeholder initiative, led by civil society and with a strong focus on youth. While the COVID-19 outbreak necessitated moving the dates of the Forum co-hosted by Mexico and France, *Generation Equality* began and will continue to galvanize broad support for accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, particularly amongst youth, identify emerging issues and promote a global discussion on the current state of gender equality. The Forum will launch action coalitions with concrete, ambitious and transformative commitments to accelerate progress in several areas over the next five years.

## II. Assessment of development results, including programme expenditures and types of contribution

8. In 2019, UN-Women supported 122 countries and territories, including high-income countries, compared to 107 in 2018, reflecting increased reach beyond physical office footprints. At the midpoint of the Strategic Plan, overall progress towards targets is positive. In total, UN-Women has achieved good performance in 72 per cent of assessable indicators in the Strategic Plan. (Figure 1). Early achievement of 2021 targets across almost a third of indicators stems from a variety of factors and suggests the possibility of raising ambition in these areas.



9. This section highlights progress against Strategic Plan outcome areas and analyses the effectiveness of UN-Women's strategies.<sup>1</sup>

10. Since the start of the Strategic Plan, UN-Women in collaboration with partners has contributed to the following results:

<sup>1</sup> For all cumulative indicators, data reported are for the first two years of the Strategic Plan (see Annex II for a detailed report of progress on all indicators).

**Global norms and standards**

118 countries were supported to conduct a 25-year review and appraisal of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, including 102 in 2019

14 global thematic briefings and dialogues were convened to prepare for intergovernmental processes, including 8 in 2019

**Leadership and governance**

266 legislative reform initiatives were undertaken with about half addressing discriminatory laws and practices

16 new national development strategies were supported to be gender-responsive, including 9 in 2019

63 initiatives were developed to monitor violence against women in politics, including 17 in 2019

Over 190,000 women were able to access legal aid, including more than 150,000 in 2019

**Economic empowerment**

59 new and/or improved gender-responsive policies on land rights were developed and/or implemented, including 28 in 2019

41 legal, regulatory and policy frameworks on decent work for women and 31 on gender-responsive social protection systems were adopted, including 24 and 18, respectively, in 2019

The number of companies signing the Women's Empowerment Principles increased by over 1,100, including 723 additions in 2019

**Ending violence against women and girls**

20 new safe cities and safe public spaces partnerships were established, including 13 in 2019

21 countries conducted community activities on gender equality and respectful relationships and developed national curricula on gender and violence against women, including 13 in 2019

**Women, peace and security, humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction**

73 per cent of humanitarian needs overviews and response plans demonstrated gender analysis, up from 45 per cent in 2018

965 civil society organizations and networks were supported to influence peace processes, including 548 in 2019

742,816 women and girls benefitted from humanitarian services, including 508,531 in 2019

**A. Outcome 1: A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is strengthened and implemented**

<b>Number of countries and territories covered:</b>	<b>Total expenditure:</b>
2018: 54	2018: \$16.26 million
2019: 114	2019: \$24.71 million

Contributes to achieving all the SDGs



11. UN-Women continued to play its central role in working with Member States and other stakeholders to strengthen global norms on gender equality and women's empowerment, engaging across 114 countries and territories (54 in 2018), a significant increase in the lead up to the Beijing+25 anniversary. The Entity provided policy analysis and strengthened partnerships across a range of intergovernmental processes. At the output level, the average attainment rate of milestones was 98 per cent (99 per cent in 2019).

**FIGURE 2: OUTCOME 1**  
**Progress against 2019 milestones**

Output		Indicator	
1	113%	1.1	100%
		1.2	90%
		1.3	139%
		1.4	122%
2	77%	2.1	133%
		2.2	22%
3	89%	3.1	89%

■ >=90% Progress     
 ■ >=60% Progress     
 ■ 0-59% Progress

12. In 2019, UN-Women convened evidence-based dialogues with Member States and technical experts and provided substantive inputs, resulting in 43 per cent of General Assembly resolutions integrating gender perspectives. Eighty-eight per cent of recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the priority theme of the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women were reflected in the agreed conclusions. UN-Women's technical support to Governments in preparing voluntary national reviews for the High-level Political Forum contributed to 74 per cent incorporating a gender perspective.

13. The Entity assisted 118 countries (102 in 2019) in the 25-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and mobilized Member States to submit reports, including supporting Kiribati and Myanmar to submit their first-ever review reports. This resulted in a record 172 national reports received.

14. As part of the Beijing+25 review process, UN-Women undertook national, sub-regional and regional consultations and youth forums, in close collaboration with United Nations partners such as UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA as well as all regional commissions. The Entity supported the UNFPA-led Nairobi Summit on the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development to forge links to the Beijing+25 review.

15. In 2019, UN-Women convened 66 dialogues with non-governmental organizations, many linked to Beijing+25 consultations. It facilitated three separate regional youth consultations in Africa, the Arab States, and Latin America and the Caribbean, resulting in youth-specific outcome documents, including statements and reports discussed in broader multi-stakeholder consultations and intergovernmental regional reviews.

16. UN-Women strengthened engagement with the Human Rights Council by providing technical support to Member States, and collaborating with the Special Procedures on country visits to Cambodia and Ecuador. UN-Women also continued to support governments in implementing recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review.

17. UN-Women continued to support implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2019, the Entity supported 94 per cent of United Nations country team reports to the CEDAW Committee (83 per cent in 2018). In South Sudan, UN-Women assisted the Government in submitting its first report to the Committee. In Nepal, UN-Women assisted the National Women's Commission in developing a monitoring framework for the Committee's concluding observations.

18. UN-Women and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) co-led a United Nations system-wide task team developing a strategy to support the participation, protection and promotion of civic space, including in times of emergency.

19. UN-Women co-chaired the gender cluster group of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, bringing together five institutional stakeholders and more than 13 other United Nations entities and specialized agencies. As a result of UN-Women's efforts, gender equality has been mainstreamed into each Task Force report and integrated into intergovernmental Financing for Development outcome documents under the Economic and Social Council.

20. UN-Women, in close partnership with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization, among other partners, successfully advocated for incorporating gender perspectives in the work on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Other efforts ensured that local women leaders could meaningfully engage in global disaster resilience processes, including the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 25).

21. Progress on outcome 1 rests on UN-Women's technical expertise and abilities to provide timely, substantive inputs to intergovernmental meetings as well as to build partnerships. It also depends on external factors such as shifts in commitment and political will to strengthen the global normative framework for gender equality and women's empowerment.

## B. Outcome 2: Women lead, participate in, and benefit equally from governance systems

**Number of countries and territories covered:**  
2018: 81  
2019: 79

**Total expenditure:**  
2018: \$60.43 million  
2019: \$60.54 million



22. Since 2018, UN-Women has strengthened outcome-level results on gender-responsive governance and the rule of law. The average attainment rate for outputs was 138 per cent (136 per cent in 2019), reflecting scope for raising ambition in this area.

23. UN-Women contributed to the adoption of 13 laws promoting gender balance in elections and decision-making bodies (8 in 2019). Progress in addressing violence against women in politics has yielded 63 initiatives (17 in 2019), encompassing legal reforms, dedicated policies and innovative tools developed with UN-Women's technical assistance. In Malawi, ahead of the 2019 elections, a multi-stakeholder mechanism provided monitoring, incident referrals to police and pro bono legal services to women candidates.

24. More than 16,000 women from diverse backgrounds gained leadership skills with UN-Women's support (5,964 in 2019). Over 100 indigenous women candidates enhanced campaign skills in Guatemala. In the Solomon Islands, UN-Women and UNDP trained all women candidates running, with a record number elected to Parliament.

**FIGURE 3: OUTCOME 2**  
**Progress against 2019 milestones**

Output		Indicator	
4	150%	4.1	150%
		4.2	150%
		4.3	150%
		4.4	150%
5	150%	5.1	150%
		5.2	150%
		5.3	150%
		5.4	150%
6	129%	6.1	150%
		6.2	123%
		6.3	150%
		6.4	91%
7	106%	7.1	150%
		7.2	17%
		7.3	150%



>=90% Progress



>=60% Progress



0-59% Progress

25. Parliamentary action to support women's participation in politics progressed, with UN-Women contributing to over 100 initiatives on gender-responsive legislation and oversight (34 in 2019) through technical support, training and advocacy, in collaboration with national partners and international organizations, including UNDP. This played a direct role in the adoption of gender parity laws in Cabo Verde and Guinea, and gender quotas in Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan and Niger. UN-Women's technical inputs and guidance to national electoral stakeholders, in coordination with UNDP, the Peacebuilding Fund and United Nations missions, informed 38 gender equality reforms (22 in 2019), including gender quotas and candidate nomination procedures, and resulted in more inclusive electoral and political processes.
26. The Entity supported gender mainstreaming in 16 national development strategies (9 in 2019), bolstering gender-responsive governance. In 29 countries, UN-Women supported the design and implementation of national action plans on gender equality (13 in 2019). Women's priorities were integrated into Mexico's National Plan of Equality between Women and Men (2019-2024).
27. UN-Women supported 36 ministries of finance to strengthen gender analysis capacities, gender budget tracking and impact assessment (22 in 2019). In Colombia, UN-Women supported the Ministry of Treasury and Public Credit to establish a gender budget marker to publicly report resource allocations.
28. UN-Women strengthened the capacities of 39 national women's machineries and 395 women's organizations (18 and 184, respectively, in 2019) to advocate for and monitor gender-responsive plans and budgets. The Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare in Malawi developed a 2019-2020 gender-responsive national budget. In North Macedonia, civil society advocacy resulted in municipal budget allocations for public transport and gender-based violence services, and improved housing for Roma women.
29. UN-Women supported 17 government institutions responsible for coordinating national HIV responses to address gender inequality (8 additional in 2019). Around 10,000 women living with HIV directly benefitted, including through expanded participation in HIV-related decision-making. In Ukraine, support helped guarantee that the 2019 national HIV strategy incorporated gender-responsive actions.
30. Building on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 16.3 as an important stimulus, UN-Women's support to legal aid has grown exponentially over the past two years, reaching 193,952 women and girls (158,314 in 2019). UN-Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supported Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone to provide legal aid for issues related to families, harmful practices, and arrest and detention. UN-Women built capacities of 23,325 justice and security sector actors to better deliver justice to women and girls (4,887 in 2019). In the State of Palestine, this resulted in transferring more violence cases from the Public Prosecutor's Office to the courts.
31. Since 2018, UN-Women has engaged in 266 legislative reform initiatives; approximately half aimed at addressing discriminatory laws and practices. As a result, Mozambique passed a new Law Against Early Unions. Jordan amended its Labour Code to guarantee equal pay.
32. UN-Women helped strengthen institutional mechanisms governing the production and use of gender statistics. Nine countries integrated gender statistics in their national statistics strategies (7 in 2019). Fourteen countries improved coordination mechanisms (9 in 2019), making decisions on gender data priorities more efficient and participatory.
33. UN-Women provided technical capacity-building for 1,550 data producers and users in 2019 and produced four reports on national SDG progress. It supported 10



surveys, including on time use, leading to concrete policy changes. Colombia improved its national care policy. In Uganda, district governments integrated a gender perspective in budget framework documents.

34. Following the launch of the [Women Count Data Hub](#) in 2019, all gender-related SDG indicators are increasingly accessible to the public, with the Hub garnering over 48,000 total views.

35. Key drivers of progress on outcome 2 include strong partnerships with other United Nations entities and the development of evidence-based, innovative and practical tools for implementation. Political and economic instability as well as insufficient coordination have limited progress.

### Spotlight on monitoring SDG data

UN-Women is the co-custodian for five SDG indicators. In 2019, data were reported for the first time on SDG indicator 5.1.1 on legal frameworks that advance gender equality from 53 countries; SDG indicator 5.c.1 on gender budget allocations from 69 countries; and SDG indicator 5.5.1b on women's participation in local governments (reclassified as a Tier I indicator in 2019) from 131 countries.

UN-Women and UNDP co-led the drafting of the "Participation in Political and Public Affairs" chapter of the first *Handbook on Governance Statistics*, providing national statistical offices worldwide with knowledge on monitoring governance issues across the SDGs.

UN-Women joined the SDG 3 Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being to support health-related SDGs and ensured a focus on gender equality.

## C. Outcome 3: Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy

Number of countries and territories covered:  
2018: 62  
2019: 62

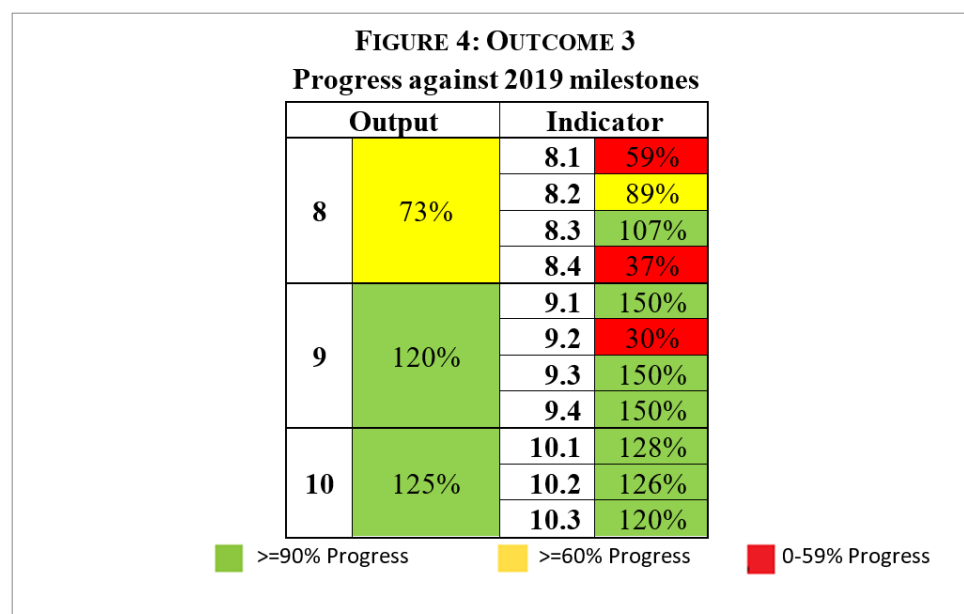
Total expenditure:  
2018: \$42.03 million  
2019: \$53.96 million



36. Since 2018, UN-Women has supported strengthening women's income security and economic autonomy by overcoming structural barriers and creating conditions for 516,000 women (116,000 in 2019) to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development.

37. Across output-level indicators, progress in attaining milestones was 105 per cent (104 per cent in 2019). Average performance on output 8 lagged at 73 per cent, due

in part to the slow pace of policy formulation and implementation, which is difficult to accurately predict.



38. UN-Women supported governments and national stakeholders in adopting 41 legal, regulatory and policy frameworks on decent work for women (24 in 2019), and 31 on gender-responsive social protection systems (18 in 2019). The Entity's technical assistance led to the adoption of 14 laws and regulations on unpaid care and domestic work (4 in 2019), and 25 gender-responsive fiscal, monetary and trade policies (8 in 2019). With support from UN-Women, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, 33 countries adopted a minimum set of gender indicators to monitor performance on women's economic empowerment against the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

39. UN-Women supported 147,573 women, 47 per cent of whom were in rural areas, to improve income-generation skills for businesses or paid employment (97,203 in 2019). In 2019, at least 4,000 of these women were migrants, including 3,500 women in refugee camps in Jordan. Approximately 221 were living with disabilities and/or HIV. UN-Women supported 34,629 women to access finance (11,575 in 2019; 42 per cent in rural areas). Partnerships with 328 public, private and United Nations entities (55 in 2019) promoted gender-responsive procurement and expanded opportunities for women entrepreneurs. The greatest gains occurred in Brazil and Uruguay with the private sector and in Senegal and South Africa with the public sector.

40. UN-Women engaged 1,112 additional companies to sign on to the Women's Empowerment Principles (723 in 2019), with a large increase among start-ups and small companies. Regionally, Latin America and the Caribbean followed by Europe and Central Asia saw the largest numbers of new signatories.

41. UN-Women supported the development, reform and/or implementation of 59 policies on women's land rights and tenure security (28 in 2019). UN-Women assisted 167,269 rural women (70,711 in 2019, of whom 3,029 were migrants and 2,026 were aged 61 or above) to access land, finance, information and agricultural inputs, including by negotiating contracts with buyers of women's products.

42. Increased progress in outcome 3 resulted from improved planning, strengthened capacities in field offices and greater leveraging of partnerships. Disaggregating data as part of reaching populations left behind, however, has been difficult, given cost and time implications as well as sensitivities in obtaining data on women migrants and women living with disabilities and/or HIV. UN-Women is re-evaluating its monitoring and evaluation instruments to improve data collection in this area.

### Leaving no one behind

UN-Women's efforts to reach and deliver results with and for women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination received a boost in 2019 with 65 per cent of country and regional offices disaggregating results by basic demographic characteristics (age, sex and/or geographic location) for at least one relevant output indicator (58 per cent in 2018).

In **Rwanda**, UN-Women supported 1,662 rural women entrepreneurs to access gender-responsive financial products. In **Chile**, the leadership, rights and economic development capabilities of 1000 indigenous women were strengthened. In **Viet Nam**, the Entity supported gender mainstreaming in the social economic development plan for ethnic minority and remote areas (2021-2030).

Through dedicated training and additional tools, UN-Women will continue to strengthen internal capacities to meet the needs of marginalized women, guarantee their full participation and measure associated results.

## D. Outcome 4: All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence<sup>2</sup>

**Number of countries and territories covered:**  
2018: 72  
2019: 71

**Total expenditure:**  
2018: \$77.52 million  
2019: \$76.39 million

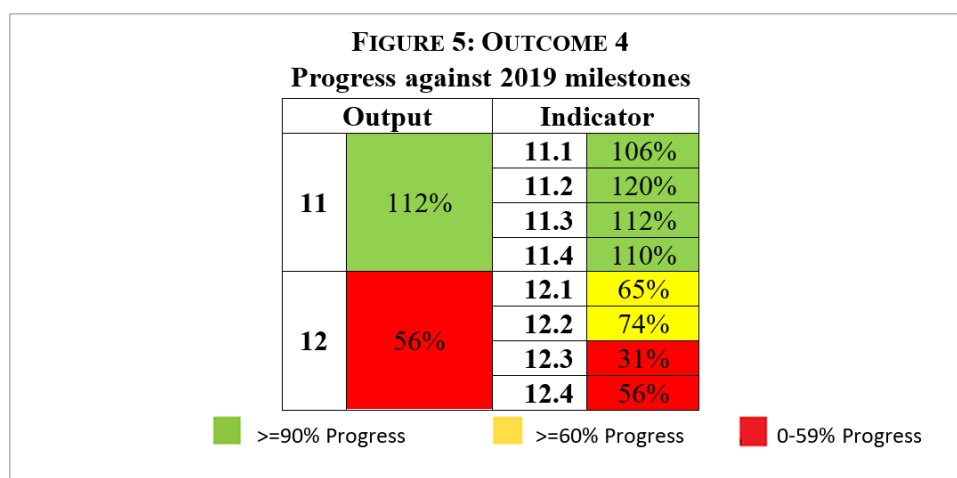


43. UN-Women's work to end violence against women and girls focuses on strengthening prevention, expanding access to services, and establishing safe and empowering public spaces. While results at the outcome level were mixed, the aggregate output-level attainment rate was 96 per cent (84 per cent in 2019). Progress in some result areas related to women's safety in cities and public spaces was gradual due to delayed programme funds.

44. Throughout 2019, UN-Women continued to leverage its United Nations system coordination function, including through large-scale global programmes. Through the European Union-United Nations *Spotlight Initiative*, launched in 2017, the Entity supported United Nations Resident Coordinators in 27 countries to lead the development of comprehensive programmes to address violence against women and girls, including harmful practices. *Spotlight* interventions have an increased focus on

<sup>2</sup> Results do not include those reported by the inter-agency United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, which are reported separately under Annex VII.

prevention and coordinated responses for survivors. UN-Women leveraged its unique networks with grass-roots women's organizations to reach marginalized women and girls.



45. To strengthen prevention, UN-Women has increasingly supported evidence-based interventions through national prevention strategies, grass-roots mobilization and educational curricula. With its support, 17 countries developed national action plans to end violence against women with components addressing social norms, attitudes and behaviours (8 in 2019). Twenty-one countries conducted community activities on gender equality and respectful relationships, and developed national informal or formal education curricula on gender and violence against women in primary and/or secondary schools (13 in 2019). In Nigeria, approximately 4.2 million people were reached by UN-Women supported campaigns and interventions aimed at ending violence against women and girls and transforming negative social norms and gender stereotypes.

46. Through the *Spotlight Initiative*, UN-Women contributed to assessments of attitudes towards femicide and violence against women in Argentina and Malawi. In Liberia, UN-Women supported a landmark prevention strategy to address violence against women and girls, including harmful practices.

47. UN-Women partnered with the World Health Organization (WHO) to launch the RESPECT Women prevention framework to influence policy makers and inform national prevention strategies. In Tanzania, UN-Women promoted community dialogues to advance gender equality and reduce violence, engaging 64,539 women, mainly in rural areas, including older women and women living with disabilities.

48. With UN-Women's technical support, 32 countries developed and/or improved guidelines, protocols and standard operating procedures for quality services for survivors (24 in 2019). Through the United Nations Global Joint Programme on Essential Services implemented by UN-Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNODC and UNDP, the Ministry of Health in Cambodia committed to providing free forensic examinations for rape survivors in all health facilities. UN-Women led the United Nations system in strengthening investigations of crimes of violence against women by law enforcement to ensure a high-quality police and judicial system response for all women and girls. This approach, partially tested in Bangladesh, Jordan and Kosovo<sup>3</sup>, addresses critical gaps in law enforcement responses such as prevention, institution-building and intersectionality.

<sup>3</sup> All references to Kosovo shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

49. UN-Women oversaw the establishment of 20 new safe cities and safe public spaces partnerships to prevent and respond to sexual violence in public spaces (13 in 2019), and supported data collection to address policy gaps. With UN-Women's support, 17 cities have available data on the prevalence of sexual harassment against women and girls in public spaces (8 in 2019). In the Philippines, UN-Women successfully supported adoption of the Safe Spaces Act. Informed by survivors, it defines sexual harassment against women in public spaces as violence and a violation of their human rights.

50. With UN-Women's support, 13 countries engaged different sectors to eliminate sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces through the transformation of social norms (7 in 2019). Partnering with the private sector, UN-Women, together with Unilever and other tea producers, leveraged partnerships with governments, non-governmental organizations and women workers to prevent and respond to violence against women in the tea sector, including in India and Kenya.

51. UN-Women's success under outcome 4 stems from strong partnerships with other United Nations entities and its thought leadership to close policy and programmatic gaps, including through the development of practical, evidence-based tools as well as the use of compelling external advocates such as Goodwill Ambassadors. Through the *Spotlight Initiative*, UN-Women is establishing a strong foundation for effective policy and programme implementation, and cementing its role as the lead global entity for coordinating coherent efforts to end violence against women and girls.

#### **E. Outcome 5: Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action**

**Number of countries and territories covered:**  
2018: 55  
2019: 65

**Total expenditure:**  
2018: \$89.44 million  
2019: \$110.53 million



52. Women's leadership in building peaceful, resilient, inclusive societies is needed more than ever as conflicts and humanitarian crises become more complex, violent and protracted. While outcome-level results were mixed, the average output attainment rate was 136 per cent (138 per cent in 2019).

**FIGURE 6: OUTCOME 5**  
**Progress against 2019 milestones**

Output		Indicator	
13	119%	13.1	84%
		13.2	122%
		13.3	122%
		13.4	150%
14	150%	14.1	150%
		14.2	150%
		14.3	150%
15	150%	15.1	150%
		15.2	150%
		15.3	150%

■ >=90% Progress
 ■ >=60% Progress
 ■ 0-59% Progress

53. Ten new national action plans on women, peace and security were adopted or updated in 2019, including with UN-Women's advocacy, financial and technical support. Seventy-nine per cent of all plans have monitoring frameworks with indicators. UN-Women leveraged its role as secretariat for the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network to support advocacy for improved monitoring and resourcing of these plans.

54. The number of women civil society representatives briefing the Security Council during country-specific meetings nearly doubled in 2019. The Council adopted two new resolutions on women, peace and security. Different views in the Council and a tendency towards shorter resolutions constrained the share of decisions with gender perspectives, which declined from 76.5 per cent in 2018 to 61.2 per cent in 2019. As the secretariat for the Security Council's Informal Experts Group, UN-Women facilitated deeper analysis of gender equality and women's rights in conflict-affected countries.

55. UN-Women is a leading advocate for women's meaningful participation across all stages of peace processes, and in humanitarian response and recovery measures. In 2018, while one in six UN-led (or co-led) peace processes did not include women negotiators in delegations, all mediation teams included women and held consultations with civil society. The number of civil society organizations and networks directly supported by UN-Women to engage in peace processes rose to 548 from 417 in 2018. The impact of longer-term engagements was evident in Syria, where women constitute close to 30 per cent of the 150-member Constitutional Committee. With UN-Women's support, 850 local women-led and women's rights organizations participated in humanitarian response and recovery measures in 2019.

56. In 2019, UN-Women trained 120 uniformed women to join peacekeeping operations. Following the launch of the Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations, UN-Women coordinated the first programming round.

57. With OHCHR and Justice Rapid Response, UN-Women deployed 28 experts to investigate conflict-related sexual violence in 2019. Other support helped strengthen 150 justice and security institutions.

58. UN-Women continued its strong partnership with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. In 2019, the Fund allocated 14.3 per cent of programmatic resources to projects with gender equality as a principal objective, up from 11 per cent in 2018.

59. In 2019, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund raised \$19 million to directly support women's rights and women-led organizations in conflict and humanitarian contexts. The Fund supports over 100 grass-roots civil society organizations.

60. UN-Women is instrumental in ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are a central focus in global humanitarian coordination. In 2019, in countries with UN-Women presence, 83 per cent of humanitarian country cluster systems had dedicated gender expertise. Among publicly available humanitarian needs overviews in 2019, 73 per cent included sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender analysis.

61. In 2019, UN-Women supported 508,531 women and girls and 28,449 men and boys on livelihoods, protection and services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence among refugees and internally displaced persons, including in the context of the Rohingya refugee, Syria and Venezuela crises, as well as the Cyclone Idai response. A total of 116,763 crisis-affected women and girls (81,537 in 2019) strengthened engagement in refugee camp management and decision-making in host communities.

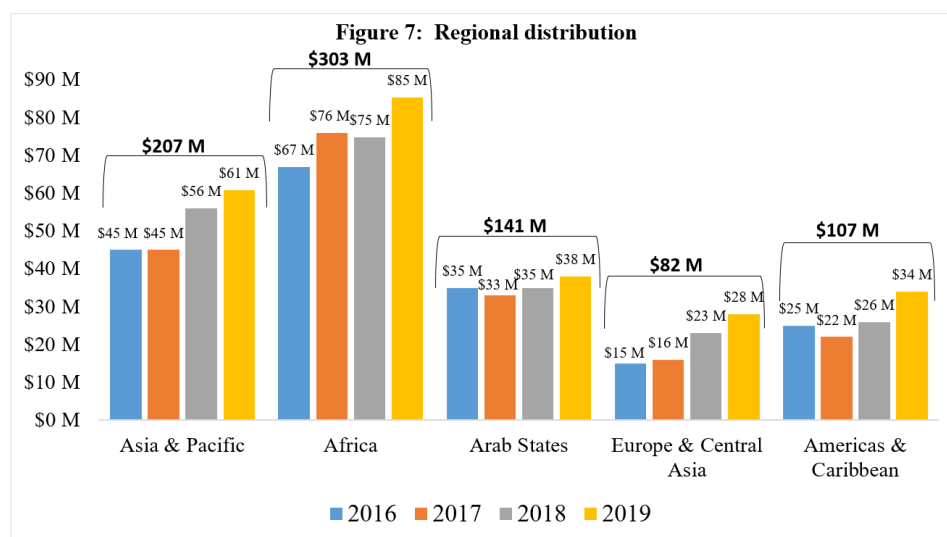
62. UN-Women contributed to gender-responsive disaster resilience plans and needs assessments in 41 countries, covering 181 million people, in close cooperation with national governments and 562 women's organizations.

63. In 2019, UN-Women combined its work on peace, security and humanitarian action in the same corporate unit to provide comprehensive support across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. This will help bridge investments in short-term, crisis-focused interventions and more long-term prevention and peacebuilding efforts to ensure sustainability, and will be essential in the response to COVID-19 and its aftermath. Following the 2019 corporate evaluation on humanitarian action and crisis response, UN-Women will strengthen strategic partnerships with humanitarian agencies and local women-led organizations to further enhance its normative and coordination work.

## **F. Programme expenditures and type of contribution**

64. Total programme expenditures in 2019 reached a record \$326.1 million, up from \$285.7 million in 2018. Expenditures in field offices increased by 98 per cent over the past five years. Fourteen per cent of UN-Women's total programme expenditures were part of joint programmes, while gender equality remained the most common joint programming area.

65. Geographically, the highest programme expenditures continued to be in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Asia and the Pacific (Figure 7). Thematically, peace and security and humanitarian action had the highest expenditure (\$111 million), followed by ending violence against women (\$77 million).



66. Capacity development and technical assistance continued to be provided in most countries (87 in 2019 and 84 in 2018) as well as advocacy and social mobilization. UN system coordination was undertaken in 77 countries, up from 69 in 2018, and integrated policy advice was provided in 60 countries, up from 56 countries in 2018.

### III. Assessment of organizational effectiveness and efficiency

67. UN-Women's efforts to strengthen organizational performance yielded overall positive results in 2019, with good performance in 70 per cent of output indicators (Figure 1). Building on key findings from evaluations and assessments, UN-Women is undergoing a change process to address key organizational challenges. Expected changes will have positive impacts on the overall performance of the organization in a repositioned UN development system.

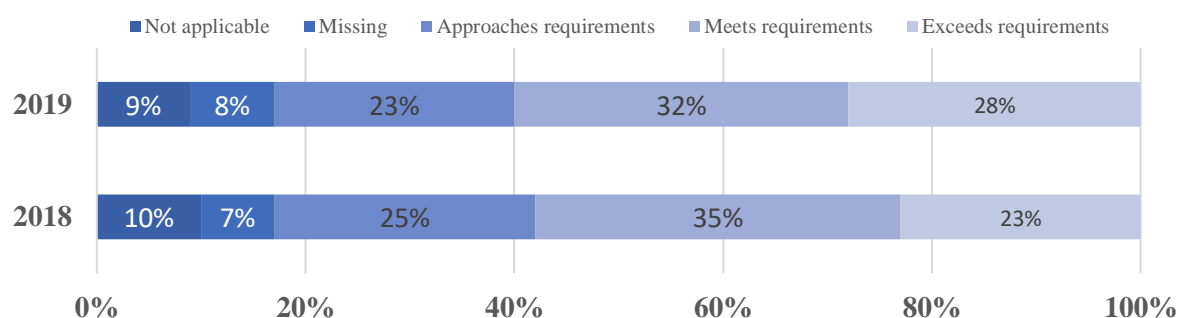
#### A. Output 1: Enhanced coordination, coherence and accountability of the UN system for commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment

68. Performance under this output exceeded milestones.

69. The proportion of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks or United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) featuring gender-specific results at the outcome level rose to 72.3 per cent in 2019.

70. Sixty-eight UN entities reported under United Nations System-wide Action Plan on gender equality and women's empowerment (UN-SWAP 2.0) with 60 per cent meeting or exceeding requirements. The percentage of these entities tracking and reporting on allocations and expenditures using gender markers increased from 36 per cent in 2018 to 41 per cent in 2019.



**Figure 8: Overall ratings of UN-SWAP 2.0 for the UN system, 2018-2019**

Source: Calculations of overall ratings for the UN system are based on 1,156 individual ratings, derived from 68 entities reporting on 17 UN-SWAP 2.0 performance indicators

71. UN-Women continued to manage the UN system's senior female talent database, proposing around 50 candidates for senior positions. It provided gender parity advice or technical support to 59 UN entities and 56 UN offices, including to implement the Enabling Environment Guidelines to advance the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

72. UN-Women co-chaired the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality, comprising 14 UN entities and departments, to review UN budgets/expenditures across the system and make recommendations on increasing financing for gender equality. The recommendations, endorsed by the Secretary-General, aim to enhance coordination, consistency and comparability of financial data across the system and to galvanize action for financial investments to accelerate progress on gender equality across the 2030 Agenda.

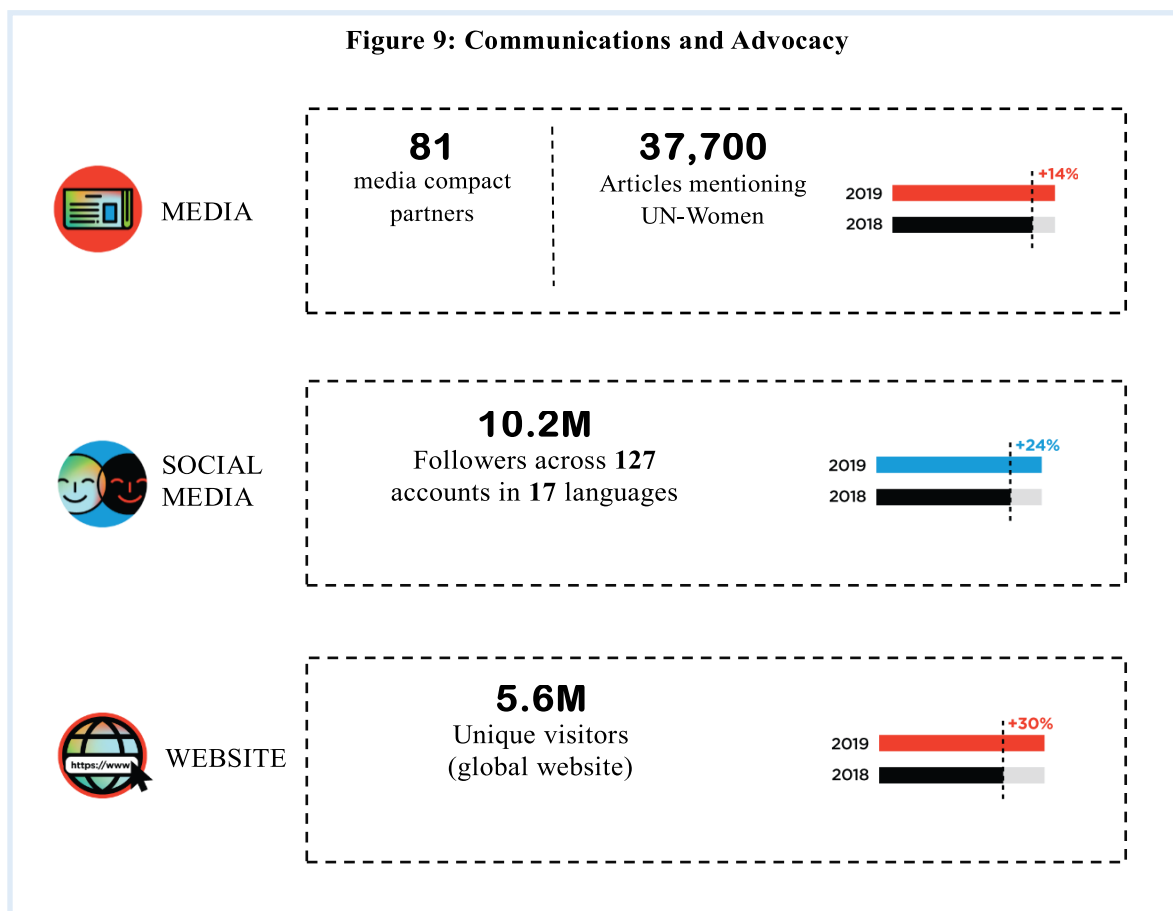
73. UN-Women continued coordinating on health policy and programming with WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World Bank in the H6 partnership for women's, children's and adolescents' health. Overall, the Entity's support to gender-responsive sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health interventions reached 30 countries in 2019.

## **B. Output 2: Increased engagement of partners in support of UN-Women's mandate**

74. UN-Women continued to be a trusted partner on gender equality and women's empowerment, achieving an average performance rate of 103 per cent under this output (99 per cent in 2019).

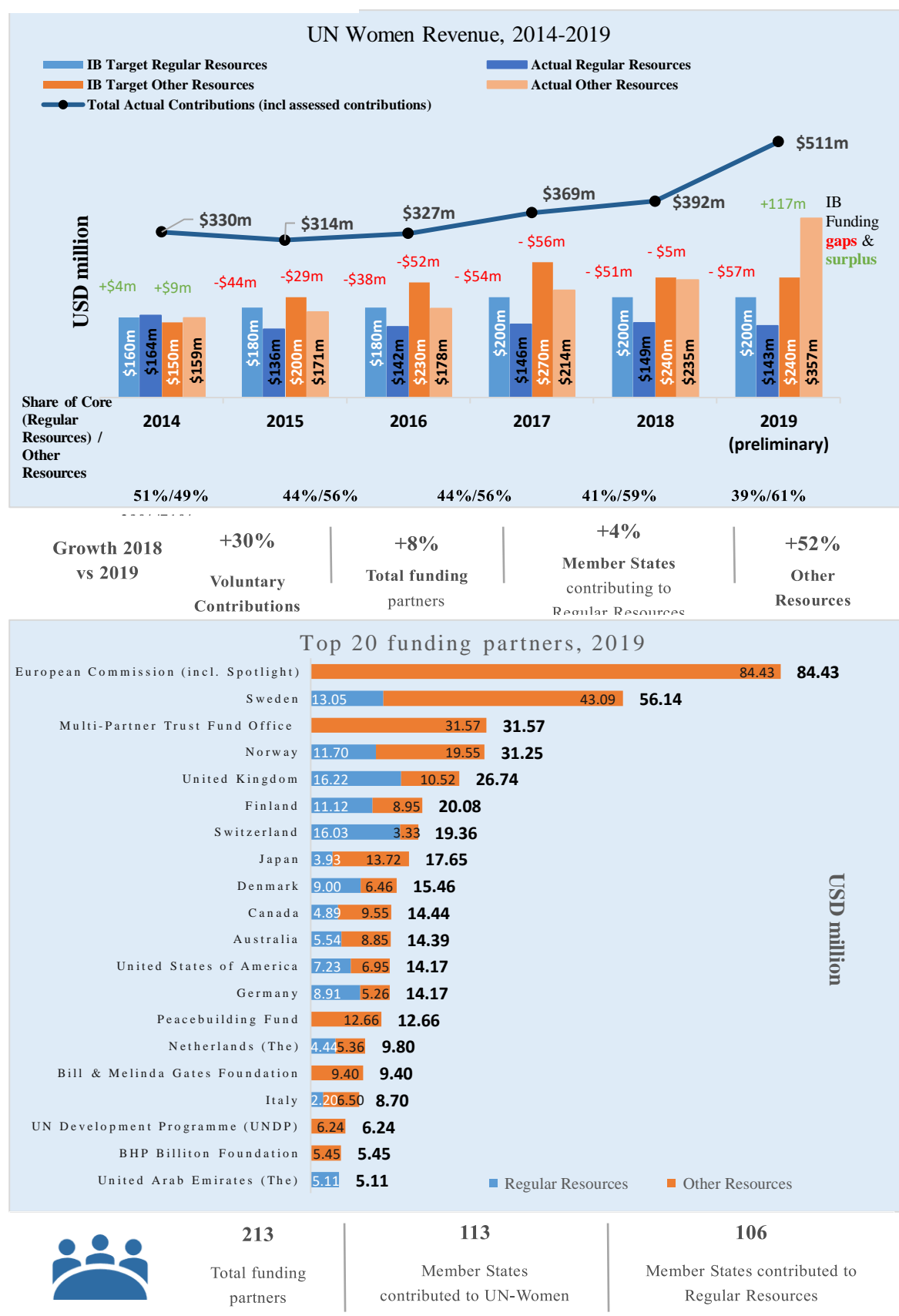
75. The Entity ramped up support to civil society through focused funding and attention geared towards Beijing+25 processes as well as the Generation Equality Forum. Inconsistent reflection of these activities in planning instruments distorted performance against two out of three indicators, however. Going forward, UN-Women will ensure work with civil society actors is more systematically embedded in its Strategic Notes and Annual Work Plans. In 2019, the Entity supported 57 initiatives of Civil Society Advisory Groups and continued to strategically engage men and boys and/or faith-based organizations in 24 countries. UN-Women prioritized youth engagement through broader consultations and mechanisms, including the Global Youth Task Force on Beijing+25.

76. UN-Women met or exceeded all 2019 communications milestones (Figure 9). HeForShe reached a growing audience of 2.3 million supporters (2.15 million in 2019) and continued to be an effective model to leverage the private sector for gender equality. UN-Women's thirteen Goodwill Ambassadors continued to play a key role in advancing the agenda with diverse audiences.



77. For the first time, UN-Women's total revenue exceeded \$500 million. However, regular resources declined to below the 30 per cent share stipulated in the Funding Compact (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Resource Mobilization



### **C. Output 3: High quality of programmes through knowledge, innovation, results-based management and evaluation**

78. UN-Women continues to enhance the quality of its programmes, with an average attainment rate under this output of 99 per cent (98 per cent in 2019). Building on a pilot conducted in Asia and the Pacific in 2019, UN-Women will conduct portfolio reviews across the organization to further strengthen quality programming.

79. In 2019, the Entity strengthened its position as a knowledge hub for gender equality, including by facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation in 46 countries and launching two new flagship reports, Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World and the World survey on the role of women in development. Citations and downloads of UN-Women knowledge products exceeded milestones. Country gender equality profiles have become important inputs for Common Country Analyses and UNSDCF. UN-Women's Training Centre continued to expand outreach on thematic priorities.

80. In 2019, UN-Women launched the She Innovates global programme, the second pilot initiative developed under the Global Innovation Coalition for Change. The Entity contributed to the Secretary-General's Task Force on the Digital Financing of the SDGs. Twelve offices explored digital innovations (6 in 2019) and 12 initiatives were implemented with private sector partners to scale up innovations (5 in 2019).

81. UN-Women continued to strengthen gender-responsive results-based management, as evidenced by further improvement in the average quality scores of Strategic Notes which rose to 80 per cent in 2019. Sixty-eight per cent of UN-Women-managed evaluations were rated 'good' or 'very good', down from 88 per cent in 2018. This decrease is connected to changes in the global assessment methodology introduced in 2018, which raised quality standards.

### **D. Output 4: Improved management of financial and human resources in pursuit of results**

82. The average performance rate under this output was 92 per cent. The Entity's International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) score reached 85, up from 78 in 2018.

83. UN-Women continued to make use of common services, exceeding 2019 milestones, specifically for common premises, and financial and procurement services. Twenty-five per cent of Country Offices reported on greenhouse gas emissions for travel and operations, exceeding the 20 per cent target.

84. In 2019, UN-Women brought critical support closer to its predominantly field-based workforce through the full decentralization of the Human Resources Business Partner function. Performance management was strengthened across the organization, with compliance rising to 80 per cent due to a revised policy and new tools.

85. The timeliness of donor reports increased to 73 per cent, although below the 2019 milestone. In 2020, to expedite progress, corporate guidance on donor reporting will be updated to strengthen regional accountability and oversight.

86. UN-Women received its eighth consecutive unqualified audit opinion for the financial year ending in 2018. While implementation of internal audit recommendations remained high (99 per cent), only 32 per cent of external audit recommendations were implemented, as they relate to complex processes requiring extensive investments and consultations. Progress is underway to ensure implementation.

87. Efforts continued to roll out the fraud risk management plan. New cloud-based tools improved cyber-security. Ninety-six per cent of offices were compliant with business continuity plans and processes.

#### **IV. Findings from the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, lessons learned and way forward**

88. The midterm review was conducted through a comprehensive review of independent evaluations and assessments, including the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) 2017-2018 Assessment of UN-Women, the Meta-synthesis of UN-Women Evaluations 2017/2018 and 2018-2019 results reports and performance, as well as internal and external consultations. The main findings, lessons learned and next steps are outlined in this section, including recommendations for the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

##### **A. Impact of COVID-19 on UN-Women's interventions**

89. As UN-Women was finalizing its midterm review, COVID-19 struck the world with devastating impact. While early data indicate that mortality rates may be higher for men, the pandemic is having major socioeconomic consequences for women and girls. The differential impact is clearly visible in women's increased care responsibilities, disruptions in formal and informal work, lack of access to health care, as well as dramatic increases in domestic violence. Globally, women make up 70 per cent of the health workforce and are more likely to be front-line health workers, especially nurses, midwives and community health workers. Yet their work and contributions remain undervalued and underpaid. These impacts require UN-Women to adjust its interventions to the current context.

90. Since the beginning of the pandemic, UN-Women has advocated taking gender dimensions into account in the immediate response and long-term recovery. It has emphasized the unique contributions that women can make to preventing and responding to COVID-19. Through policy briefs, thought leadership pieces and communications products, UN-Women has leveraged knowledge from previous epidemics to advise on possible impacts and appropriate responses. Gender data has been widely disseminated through the Women Count Data Hub. UN-Women has proactively engaged with the United Nations system to integrate gender perspectives across coordinated responses and funding mechanisms.

91. UN-Women's response framework has focused on five priorities:

1. Ensuring women's equal representation in all COVID-19 response planning and decision-making
2. Addressing increases in violence against women and girls, including through coordinated UN support
3. Applying an intentional gender lens to social protection and socio-economic stimulus packages
4. Addressing the care economy, paid and unpaid, including through the engagement of men and boys
5. Supporting the establishment of dedicated coordination mechanisms and the availability and analysis of gender data

92. Building on these priorities, and as part of United Nations country teams, field offices have reprogrammed activities in consultation with national partners to respond

to the pandemic. Some immediate interventions included: technical assistance to conduct rapid assessments, mappings and analyses; support to civil society organizations to contribute to response efforts; support to hotlines, shelters and referral services addressing violence against women, including by leveraging new technologies; support for social protection programmes benefiting women, including older women; and the development of risk mitigation plans.

93. UN-Women has also taken rapid measures to ensure the safety and security of its workforce, while guaranteeing business continuity.

94. Acknowledging the pandemic's long-term consequences and the likely slow recovery, UN-Women has started a corporate reprioritization exercise to assess anticipated impacts on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, as well as the need to pivot its programme portfolio to ensure its continued relevance to the current context. UN-Women will closely engage with the Executive Board in this process.

## **B. Relevance of the Strategic Plan in the context of Beijing+25 and the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals**

**95. The midterm review confirmed that UN-Women's priorities continue to be relevant in supporting the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While some areas require greater investments, the findings and recommendations of the Beijing+25 review and appraisal largely align with UN-Women's priorities.**

96. The Beijing+25 review and appraisal highlighted that, despite achievements in some areas, progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment has not been fast or deep enough. Major gaps and obstacles remain, including structural barriers, discriminatory practices and the feminization of poverty. Regressive legal and policy reforms, the hollowing out of key institutions mandated to advance gender equality, and shrinking civic space for women's rights organizations have contributed to stalling or reversing hard-won gains. Women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination have been particularly affected. New challenges have emerged, including climate change, unprecedented numbers of displaced people, and new technologies. The need for long-term, sustainable, structural transformations to advance gender equality and women's empowerment is greater than ever.

97. UN-Women's triple mandate and its Strategic Plan continue to be relevant in addressing the challenges and opportunities identified by the Beijing+25 review. While working comprehensively across its thematic areas, UN-Women will look for opportunities to focus on some Beijing+25 priorities in line with its comparative advantages. These include support for:

1. Eliminating all discriminatory laws, and ensuring that laws, policies and programmes benefit all women and girls
2. Measures to address unpaid care and domestic work, and strengthened social protection systems for women and girls
3. Young women and youth feminist movements to participate in decision-making
4. Improved collection, analysis and use of gender statistics
5. Harnessing the potential of technology and innovation to improve women's and girls' lives, and addressing cyber-violence against women and girls

6. Promoting the leadership of women and girls and gender perspectives on environmental and climate action

7. Strengthening the protection and participation of women and girls at all stages of peace processes and mediation efforts

98. Key cross-cutting issues comprise social norm change and tackling gender stereotypes, including through the engagement of men and boys. The principle of leaving no one behind and capacity-building will be more rigorously integrated into programming, based on evidence and aiming for measurable results. More systematic implementation of cross-thematic approaches to programming will help avoid siloed interventions and deliver sustainable, transformative change.

99. UN-Women will build on related processes, such as Generation Equality, to galvanize action in support of the implementation of the Platform for Action. The Entity will optimize the alignment of the new Strategic Plan with findings of Beijing+25, Security Council resolution 1325 and priorities of the Decade of Action, particularly SDG 5 which has the potential to unlock results across the 2030 Agenda.

### C. Opportunities and challenges of United Nations system reforms

**100. Reforms of the United Nations system have largely had positive impacts on UN-Women's ability to advance gender equality and women's empowerment across the UN system and enhanced inter-agency collaboration. For these gains to be consolidated and to achieve tangible results for women and girls, it will be important for system-wide incentives and accountability measures to be strengthened.**

101. UN system reforms represent significant changes in the operating environment of the UN system and UN-Women. The 2030 Agenda and its commitment to leave no one behind are now firmly embedded in the work of the UN development system. A strengthened coordination architecture is in place with an enhanced role for Resident Coordinators. It is expected that these changes will place increasing demands on UN-Women to provide cross-cutting thought leadership and expertise on gender equality and women's empowerment to the UN system at all levels. Similarly, there is an elevated focus on UN-Women's role in leading system-wide coordination on gender equality.

102. UN-Women has ensured that gender equality and women's empowerment are centrally positioned in new and revised structures and processes supporting the 2030 Agenda. These encompass UNSDCF guidance documents, gender equality markers and gender mainstreaming tools, as well as efforts towards gender parity.

103. Incentives and accountability measures to accelerate progress on gender equality, women's empowerment and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda must be strengthened, especially in countries where UN-Women is a non-resident agency or resource-constrained. UN-Women will continue to build on its close collaboration with United Nations funds and programmes and the Development Coordination Office, and actively participate in all reform streams and regional reviews to advance gender equality considerations.

104. Early indications from a survey of UN-Women field offices suggest that reforms are positively influencing interagency collaboration and UN-Women's work. The Mutual Accountability Framework has significantly improved the role of Resident Coordinators in interagency collaboration and supporting efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Opportunities have grown for UN-Women to

engage with United Nations country teams, including through joint advocacy and joint programming.

105. Funding fragmentation represents a major obstacle to collaboration, however. While promising, the mutual benefits of the Funding Compact are yet to be fully realized. UN-Women has endeavored through the structured dialogues on financing and joint informals on the Funding Compact to enhance mutual commitments and accountability, and improve the quality of funding and joint results. More efforts are needed by donors and the UN development system to create incentives for coherent approaches in line with respective mandates.

106. Field offices have consistently highlighted joint programmes as a strategic opportunity to accelerate progress on gender equality. UN-Women sees a major opportunity in leveraging its UN system coordination function, including by promoting system-wide accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment, to systematically mainstream gender perspectives into UNSDCF.

107. UN-Women will continue to seize opportunities emerging from the reforms and leverage the UN system through UN system coordination and accountability mechanisms to champion gender equality and women's empowerment across its priority areas. The Entity will strengthen results-based coordination by better embedding it into its programming tools, including by leveraging joint programmes and CCAs/UNSDCFs. It will do so in a range of contexts, including across the humanitarian-development nexus and its linkages to peace, by utilizing such tools as country gender equality profiles, UNCT-SWAP gender scorecards and the IASC Gender Accountability Framework report and analysis. UN-Women will also enhance harmonized and integrated reporting with other UN agencies.

#### **D. Enhancing programmatic focus through more systematic approaches and better measurement**

**108. UN-Women has demonstrated strong results in meeting its Strategic Plan targets. In light of continued funding challenges, however, and to enhance sustainability and impact, UN-Women must further enhance its programmatic focus by identifying specific results with the greatest impact and developing standardized products building on its comparative advantages. This is particularly important in the context of the COVID-19 response, where UN-Women is well placed to support efforts to address violence against women and girls, incorporate a gender lens in socio-economic packages, and enhance data collection and analysis on the gendered impact of the crisis and response.**

109. Evaluations have found that the Entity's interventions across thematic areas are relevant and effective, and have made significant contributions to development results and the realization of women's rights. They meet target groups' needs, and align with global frameworks and national priorities. UN-Women's investments in supporting the strengthening of national capacities to translate global normative commitments into national legislative frameworks and policies and implement them have enhanced the sustainability of results.

110. UN-Women has improved its programmatic focus, including through its Flagship Programming Initiatives, but further efforts are required to balance the ability to seize opportunities with a strategic approach. While the Entity has made important contributions to strengthening global and national normative frameworks, the scale and sustainability of its results can be improved by translating these gains into operational results. The Flagship Programming Initiatives have improved



prioritization and enhanced partnerships, although funding challenges prevented a consistent approach in their roll-out.

111. Building on these efforts, UN-Women will aim to enhance consistency in its interventions across geographies with standardized products, such as country gender equality profiles, that allow greater comparability and aggregation of results. It will further strengthen organizational and thematic theories of change and enhance evidence-based programme design focused on addressing the structural causes of gender inequalities.

112. This will be complemented by the roll-out of its knowledge management strategy, comprehensive inputs into UNSDCF processes, conflict and gender analyses, and portfolio reviews to systematically ensure the relevance and impact of interventions. Lessons from evaluations will be further leveraged to inform programming and cultivate a stronger culture of learning. This will strengthen UN-Women's ability to: (1) prioritize and ground programming; (2) position UN-Women as a thought leader on gender equality and women's empowerment; (3) strengthen normative-operational linkages; and (4) inform the development of UNSDCFs in an integrated manner.

113. UN-Women will place special emphasis on scale and sustainability, including through applying an intentional lens to leaving no one behind, developing clear exit strategies and reinforcing links between the peace and security, human rights and sustainable development pillars.

114. The Entity will continue to strengthen its programmatic focus in line with its comparative advantages and mandate, and in response to emerging needs, especially the pandemic and the UN Decade of Action. UN-Women will review its priority areas as part of developing its next Strategic Plan to ensure they are adaptive, including to address COVID-19 impacts.

## **E. Partnerships as a modality to achieve scale and enhance impact**

**115. A central learning from the midterm review has been the importance of leveraging partners within the United Nations system and beyond for UN-Women to realize its mandate and take results on gender equality and women's empowerment to scale. UN-Women will build on opportunities created by Beijing+25 and Generation Equality to enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of its development results.**

116. Evaluations find that UN-Women is a well-recognized, valued partner on gender equality and women's empowerment, with a reputation for high-quality inputs to policy dialogues at all levels. The Entity is seen as a bridge-builder among stakeholders, notably governments and local women's organizations. As the leading entity in the United Nations system on gender mainstreaming, it has made notable contributions to advancing accountability for gender equality. Despite inadequate resources and structural challenges, UN-Women has, for the most part, had significant success in leveraging partnerships and its UN system coordination mandate, including in humanitarian settings, to create an enabling environment for the realization of women's rights.

117. Persistent challenges include a lack of recognition of UN-Women's mandate for UN system coordination, uneven capacities, resource shortages, and the need for greater articulation of the development impacts of partnerships and coordination. Inter-agency coordination mechanisms and frameworks at headquarters and in the field, including gender theme groups, are instrumental to implementing the

coordination mandate but UN-Women needs to be more systematically engaged in relevant coordination bodies.

118. Good progress continued in the six areas of collaborative advantage of the common chapter of the strategic plans of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN-Women, as outlined in Annex V. A survey conducted as part of the 2020 evaluability assessment of the common chapter found that 100 per cent of staff surveyed considered the common chapter either a key driver or a positive influence for improved collaboration among the common chapter agencies. Nonetheless, while collaboration between the four agencies is solid and growing, the imperatives of UNDS reform require collaboration across the entire system and the utility of the common chapter as a separate initiative should be reviewed in that context.

119. UN-Women will build on its good relations with Governments and its convening role to increase its engagement with line ministries, drawing on strong relationships with national women's machineries. At the same time, UN-Women will continue to support the latter, which remain under-resourced and under-capacitated.

120. UN-Women's deep and longstanding relationship with civil society represents a strong comparative advantage. The Entity will bolster results-oriented partnerships with local civil society and youth organizations, grass-roots and community-based organizations, women human rights defenders and women's networks, with a focus on reaching the most vulnerable women and girls.

121. UN-Women will continue engaging the private sector in support of programmatic results, especially through advocacy, standard-setting and technical support. Initiatives such as the *Unstereotype Alliance* and *HeForShe* have provided good models for encouraging the transformation of businesses through the adoption of gender-responsive practices. UN-Women will also leverage its communications function to advance policy positions through high-profile engagements, strategic communications and dedicated media partnerships.

122. In its partnership approach, UN-Women will prioritize two aspects. First, it will support multi-stakeholder partnerships, bringing together a wide diversity of partners to focus on common objectives, enhance coordination and scale up financing; the Generation Equality Forum embodies this approach. Second, UN-Women will more clearly embed stakeholder analysis in its programming and ensure its interventions leverage large players in support of results and to achieve scale and sustainability.

123. The Entity will review which partnerships it prioritizes and how it leverages existing partnerships, and increase the coherence, focus, agility and results orientation of engagement modalities. UN-Women will develop partnership management strategies to balance organizational capacities with ambition and manage the expectations of all stakeholders, since increasing demands for this work have not been matched by a commensurate rise in resources.

## **F. Transforming UN-Women to achieve greater impact through an optimized structure, presence and processes**

**124. As the MOPAN assessment noted, UN-Women has made many changes to increase organizational effectiveness and strengthen capacities to meet current and anticipated needs. This has resulted in UN-Women securing eight consecutive unqualified audits. Continued investment is needed in this area, particularly for greater support to policy and programmatic work.**

125. In response to General Assembly Resolution 72/279, independent evaluations and the MOPAN assessment, and driven by its own ambitions to be a responsive,

agile and mature organization, UN-Women initiated a change management process to optimize its structures, enhance business processes and internal governance, and deliver impactful results in a repositioned United Nations development system.

126. UN-Women's comprehensive assessment of its field presence and engagement modalities consisted of:

- An analysis of UN-Women's existing regional and country presences in terms of resources available and key indicators to optimize capacity and support
- Further articulating the types of support UN-Women can provide as a non-resident entity to national partners and United Nations country teams

127. Based on this review, the Entity decided to rationalize its physical presence, prioritizing full-fledged country offices and taking full advantage of UN partners in countries where it is not present. UN-Women revised its internal management processes to fast-track operational decision-making.

128. In 2020, the Entity is further developing the functional set-up and 'menu of services' for each office type, to provide a benchmark for UN-Women presences. This will bring consistency across presences worldwide, while enabling flexibility to adapt to country contexts and priorities. Pilots of delivering results through regional programmes and partnering with United Nations country teams and local implementers have yielded evidence of the effectiveness of non-resident modalities.

129. To bring greater coherence between policy and programme and to enhance normative-operational linkages, UN-Women merged the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Support Divisions. The Strategy, Planning, Resources and Development Effectiveness Division integrates corporate strategy, alignment of resource allocations with results, integration of risk management with planning, and measurement of impact to support improved decision-making and governance to manage for results, while ensuring increased transparency and accountability to UN-Women's Executive Board and stakeholders. All teams managing private sector partnerships were combined in one section in the Strategic Partnerships Division.

130. Looking ahead, change efforts will focus on enabling UN-Women to create a globally networked and matrixed organization. The Entity will continue to advance its ambition to be an invigorated, mature organization, driving for impact with a stronger, inter-connected field and more efficient headquarters.

## **G. Enhancing regular resources and diversifying funding**

**131. The midterm review underscored the criticality of flexible and predictable funding, particularly regular (core) resources, for UN-Women to optimally deliver on its triple mandate. A diversified funding strategy and intensified efforts to mobilize regular resources, including through shared-value partnerships, will be essential.**

132. To strengthen the alignment of programming with strategic priorities, rectifying the current imbalance between regular and other resources is of paramount importance. This is especially crucial to safeguard development gains and enable swift and impactful responses in the context of, but not limited to, COVID-19.

133. Mobilizing regular resources will be enabled by UN-Women's ability to articulate the link between results and resources, and the results foregone by not meeting Board-endorsed funding targets. Flexible and predictable funding allows the Entity to better plan and prioritize resources based on evolving priorities within

Strategic Plan outcomes. Part of this strategy requires investments in national committees and strengthening shared-value partnerships with the private sector.

134. The Entity will continue to leverage the Funding Compact and pooled financing mechanisms to strengthen inter-agency collaboration. To realize high-impact results through effectively leveraging UN system-wide processes and utilizing new opportunities, adequate resources for the UN system coordination function are critical. The Entity will endeavor to more systematically embed and track UN system coordination costs in its work.

## H. Adjustments to the Integrated Results and Resources Framework

**135. Limited adjustments to the current results framework are proposed in this midterm review. These revisions do not compromise tracking change across the full Strategic Plan time frame or harmonization with sister organizations.**

136. UN-Women will better articulate its contributions to the SDGs, including the principle of leaving no one behind, in its results framework. While 2019 reporting on work with marginalized populations was much improved compared to 2018, this area requires continued strengthening. COVID-19 has highlighted the need to better measure the effectiveness of crisis response in a more comprehensive manner, beyond humanitarian settings.

137. Specific adjustments to the current results framework are recommended in Annex IV. Adjustments are limited to ensure the integrity of the results framework and allow for a sense of trajectory. Proposed adjustments include: raising ambition for indicators where the target has been met; revising targets impacted by COVID-19 and other developments; adjusting some indicators for greater focus and clarity, and those with unavailable data or persistent methodological issues; and clarifying indicator statements for stronger reporting on leaving no one behind. UN-Women will continue to strengthen harmonized and integrated reporting with other UN entities.

## I. Outlook to the next Strategic Plan 2022-2025

**138. The next Strategic Plan will be geared towards full, accelerated and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda and other relevant intergovernmental normative frameworks, including by better leveraging and capturing the results of partnerships and UN system coordination.**

139. Findings from this midterm review will feed into the preparation of the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025. A roadmap for its development will be presented to the Executive Board in September 2020.

140. UN-Women will aim to improve the following aspects: 1) capture the impact of its work, including on women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination; 2) articulate its contributions to the SDGs and the Decade of Action, and the full and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action following its 25-year review; 3) measure results that cut across different thematic areas; 4) measure and communicate development results realized through partnerships, UN system coordination, normative support and social norms work, as well as grant-making modalities; 5) measure its effectiveness to respond to crises; and 6) capture the Entity's pursuit of greater environmental sustainability.

## V. Elements of a draft decision

The Executive Board may wish to:

- (a) Take note of the report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, including the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, welcome the progress made in the implementation of the strategic plan and commend UN-Women on its strong performance to date;
  - (b) Recognize UN-Women's contributions and its focused engagement on the repositioning of the United Nations development system to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment feature centrally in the sustainable development agenda, including in Cooperation Frameworks at the country level;
  - (c) Support UN-Women's ongoing internal change management processes and strategic adjustments to enable the Entity to better deliver on United Nations reform processes, and encourage UN-Women, Member States and United Nations entities to strengthen partnerships in this regard;
  - (d) Take note with concern of the ongoing funding gap in regular resources, and in this regard, encourage all countries in a position to do so to increase voluntary contributions for the full and effective implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021.
-