



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

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Structured dialogue on financing

Structured Dialogue on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021

Summary

In accordance with UN-Women Executive Board decisions on the structured dialogue on financing, the most recent being 2019/11, this report supports an ongoing dialogue on financing the results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021, with the overall objective that the Executive Board-endorsed integrated budgets are fully financed in support of the comprehensive implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

The format and content of the present report has been prepared in view of Executive Board decision 2019/11 and aims to better demonstrate alignment of resources with the expected results in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, taking into account recent discussions and recommendations to improve the quality of structured dialogues on financing and steps taken to harmonize approaches to structured dialogues on financing and Funding Compact reporting by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women.

In 2019, UN-Women total revenue from all sources increased by 30 per cent to \$527.4 million. Compared to 2018, regular resources decreased by 4 per cent to \$143 million and other resources increased by 52 per cent to \$357.5 million, with the remaining funding received as assessed contributions and other revenue. The large increase in other resources in 2019 is primarily related to funding received from the European Commission for the European Union and United Nations global Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women. Alongside the positive upward trajectory in other resources, there was a regular resources shortfall of \$57 million, or a 28.5 per cent deficit against the Executive Board-endorsed 2019 integrated budget.

Elements of a draft decision for consideration by the Executive Board are included in section XII of this report.



I. Introduction

1. UN-Women is the only United Nations entity fully dedicated to supporting efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including women's full enjoyment of their human rights. Its mandate is operationalized through its Strategic Plan 2018–2021, endorsed by the Executive Board. The plan outlines the strategic direction, objectives and approaches to empower women and girls, in line with long-standing global commitments to women and gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2. UN-Women and its Executive Board hold structured dialogues in accordance with General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, to consider the financing of the results envisioned in UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

3. In 2019, thanks to the contributions from 218 committed partners, contribution revenue reached \$510.6 million. This is the first year that UN-Women contribution revenue reached the \$500 million mark, the estimated optimum funding level envisioned for the Entity at its establishment. Growth was driven by increases in other resources, which totalled \$357.5 million, up from \$235.26 million in 2018. Regular resources totalled \$143 million, down from \$149 million in 2018.

4. In the context of the current COVID-19 global pandemic and global economic downturn – which places many disproportionate burdens on women and girls – it is critical that Member States and multilateral organizations join forces to prevent the further backsliding of gender equality and women's empowerment by ensuring political will as well as investments to support women's full enjoyment of their human rights.

Interagency collaboration

5. UNDP, UNFPA UNICEF, and UN-Women embrace the principles of the Funding Compact, are aligned with its parameters and committed to its implementation in the spirit of mutual collaboration with Member States. Taking note of Executive Board requests to further improve the quality of structured dialogues, as well as the format and content of reporting, the four agencies have implemented more granularity regarding results, improved linkages and analysis between the implementation of the Strategic Plan and resources, and increased harmonization of structured dialogue reporting. Interagency collaboration is further enhancing the alignment of approaches to funding dialogues and the Funding Compact.

6. Joint structured dialogues with the membership of the four agencies' Executive Boards took place in 2019 and 2020. In August 2019, a joint informal session was organized on the Funding Compact to foster common understanding and engagement, and identify key challenges and opportunities to advance its implementation. In January 2020 a joint briefing was held to discuss options to improve the format, content, and frequency of Structured Funding Dialogues. The four entities presented three common funding considerations: (i) that flexible and predictable funding helps agencies to fulfil their mandates with the right balance of regular and other resources; (ii) that the planning and budgeting cycle in a voluntarily funding environment is highly dependent on the adequacy and predictability of resources, especially flexible resources over a multi-year period; and (iii) that funding gaps (understood as the difference between planned resources and contributions received and planned resources and actual budget expenditures) that help gauge compliance with the respective integrated results and resources framework/biennium integrated budget, can also be considered as the variances between Funding Compact commitment

targets and progress to date, in line with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system operational activities.

II. Overall Financing Situation

7. Resource contributions to UN-Women enable critical progress for women and girls worldwide, in line with the five outcome areas in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, which are: (1) strengthen implementation of a comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women’s empowerment; (2) women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; (3) women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; (4) all women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; and (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, conflicts and humanitarian action.

8. To enable UN-Women to leverage its comparative and collaborative advantages and accelerate the achievement of results for women and girls, the Executive Board has endorsed ambitious but achievable four-year (2018–2021) voluntary contribution revenue targets of \$1.85 billion via two biennium integrated budgets, segmented as \$800 million (or 43 per cent) in regular resources and 1.05 billion (or 57 per cent) in other resources.

Investment in UN-Women’s Strategic Plan (biennium 2018-2019)

9. UN-Women receives three sources of contribution revenue: (1) assessed contributions, also known as assessed resources; (2) regular resources, also known as core resources or un-earmarked voluntary contributions; and (3) other resources, also known as non-core resources or earmarked voluntary contributions. In addition, UN-Women generates “other revenue” from investment income, exchange transactions and other sources.

10. In 2019, total revenue from all sources reached \$527.4 million, an increase of 30 per cent compared to 2018 and of 65 per cent since 2015. Total revenue comprised \$10.2 million in assessed resources; \$143 million in regular resources; \$357.5 million in other resources and \$16.8 million in other revenue.

Table 1
UN-Women revenue, 2015–2019

(millions of United States dollars)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Assessed resources	7.51	7.61	8.31	8.03	10.16
Regular resources	136.05	141.66	146.4	149.03	142.97
Other resources	170.93	178.08	214.24	235.26	357.45
Other revenue	4.5	7.22	9.28	12.39	16.85
Total revenue	318.99	334.57	378.25	404.72	527.43
Annual growth (percentage)		+4.9 per cent	+13.1 per cent	+7 per cent	+30 per cent

11. Assessed contributions are generated through appropriations from Member States and are allocated to UN-Women from the United Nations regular budget, as approved by the General Assembly. In 2019, UN-Women received \$10.2 million in assessed contributions, equivalent to 1.9 per cent of the entity’s overall resources. In

2018, the most recent year for which Chief Executives Board data is available, UN-Women received the smallest amount of assessed contributions among recorded United Nations entities.

12. Growth was driven by an increase in other resources, which meant that UN-Women surpassed the integrated budget target of \$240 million by \$117.5 million. This is primarily accounted for by the multi-year contribution in 2019 of \$59.2 million from the European Commission for the European Union and United Nations Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women. In contrast, regular resources decreased by \$6 million compared to 2018 and was \$57 million less than the integrated budget target of \$200 million.

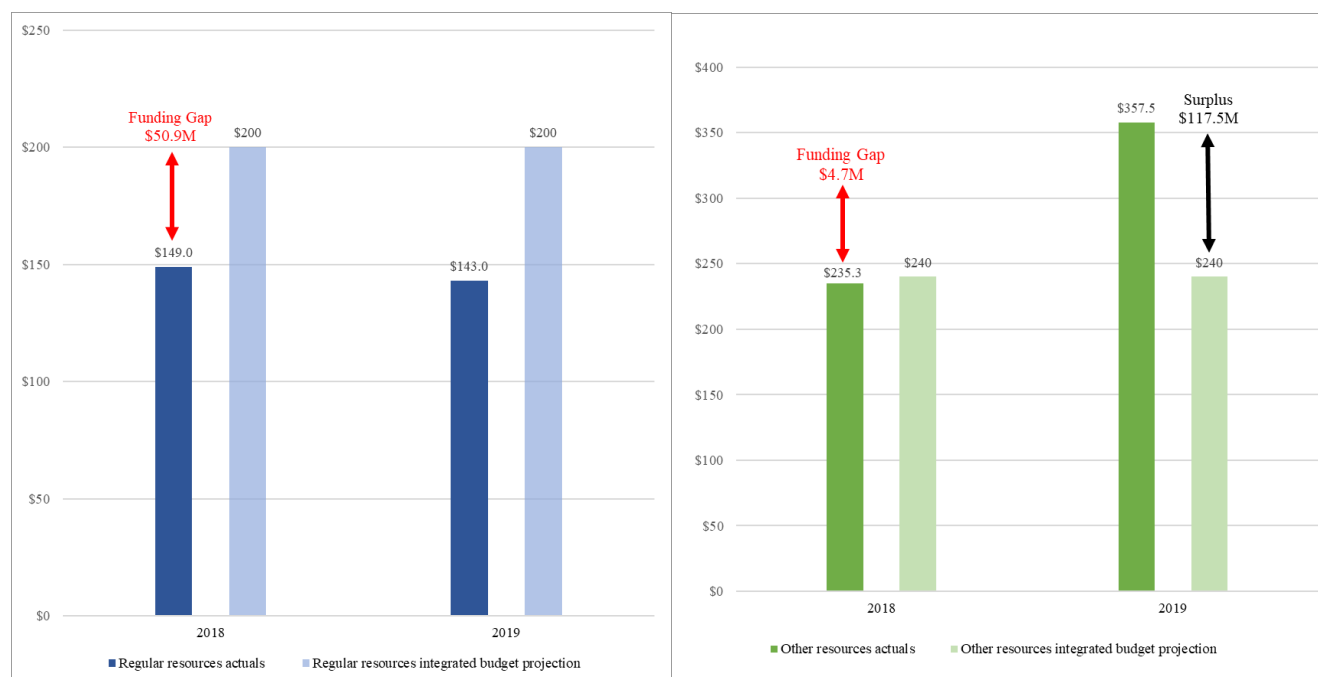
13. The ambition of the recent Funding Compact ([A/74/73/Add.1](#)) between Member States and the United Nations development system is to place United Nations development work on a more secure financial footing. The compact recognizes that funding patterns characterized by a decline in regular resources and a rising share of tightly earmarked other resources increase “transaction costs, fragmentation, volatility and competition among [United Nations] entities ... [and] hinder the system’s ability to respond in integrated, flexible and dynamic ways to member States’ demands and national priorities.” Through the compact, Member States have committed to bring United Nations development system entities’ share of regular resources to a minimum of 30 per cent.¹

14. The shrinking share of regular resources: (i) increases the risk of cross-subsidization of other-resource funded programmes. Programme results depend on robust regular resource funding for expert staff and offices that make UN-Women a global organization equipped to deliver, including at country-level where UN-Women’s ability to influence gender-responsive outcomes can be limited by the ability to assure continued senior policy advice funded by regular resources; (ii) increases dependency on other resources, tagged to piecemeal interventions, which limits the organizations’ ability to carry out multi-sectoral, holistic and integrated interventions required to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals and carry out its mandate in an integrated and sustainable manner; (iii) reduces the ability to invest in research and evidence to produce high quality programmes that make the case for changing policies and public opinion; (iv) limits the organization’s flexibility to respond quickly to a changing context and ability to provide seed funding for programme activities in emerging areas of work, particularly in cases of underfunded and emergency needs, making it difficult to reach the most marginalized and those left furthest behind; and (v) makes it difficult for the organization to support institutional budget functions that enable leadership, representation, independent assurance, strategic and programme direction, operations and financial controls and management oversight, corporate communications, resource mobilization, external relations, and corporate security, required to build a strong organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls globally.

¹ Regular resources (unearmarked voluntary contributions that can be spent flexibly) underpin a range of essential institutional functions, including leadership and representation, to independent assurance, strategic and programme direction setting and implementation, operations and fiduciary duties, corporate communications, resource mobilization, external relations and corporate security. They are the bedrock of UN-Women’s gender equality and women’s empowerment work worldwide. Other resources (earmarked voluntary contributions) complement regular resources by supporting the achievement of programme results and allowing the scale up of programme interventions from the foundations enabled by regular resources as well as the expansion and replication of best programme practices and capacity development in countries.

Figure I
Regular and other resource funding gaps and surplus, biennium 2018–2019

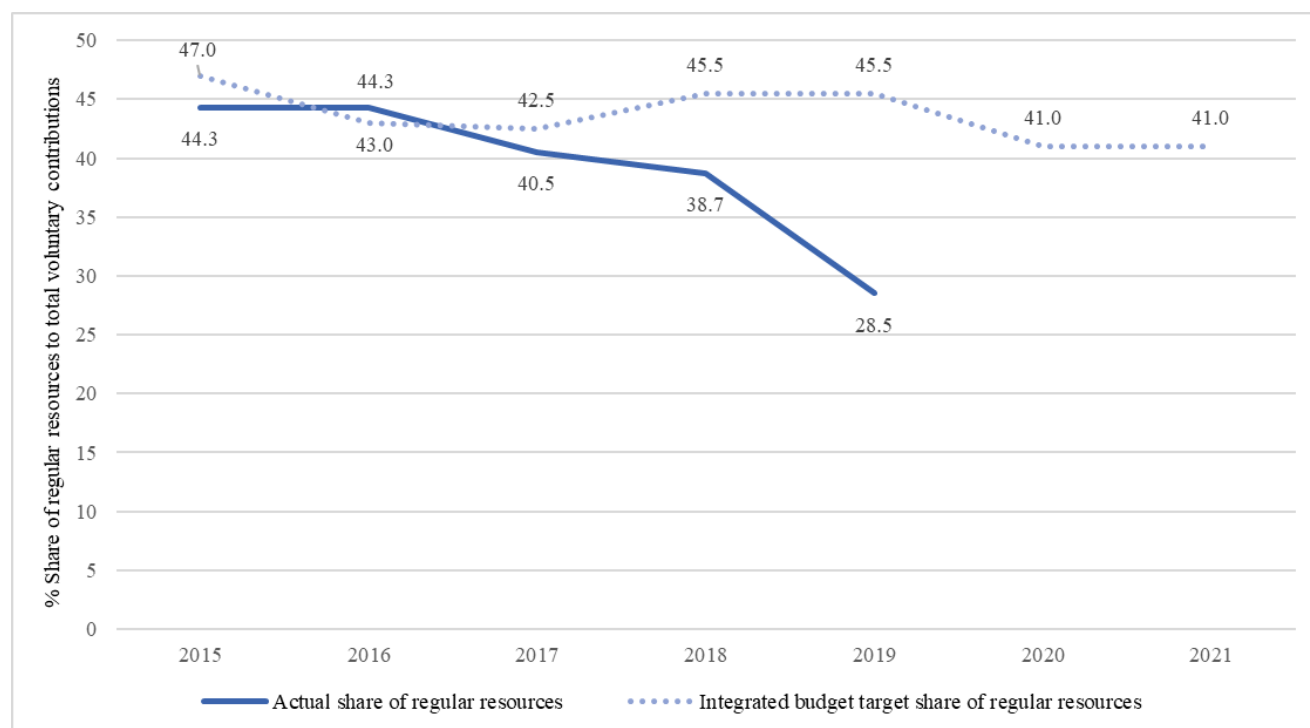
(millions of United States dollars)



15. While the 2019 integrated budget target share of revenue received as regular resources is 45.5 per cent of total voluntary contribution revenue with the remaining 54.5 per cent to be received as other resources, the actual share of regular resources received fell to 28.5 per cent of total voluntary contributions, from 38.7 per cent in 2018 and 44.3 per cent in 2015. This is the first time in the history of the entity that regular resources fell below the Funding Compact threshold of 30 per cent.

16. UN-Women's mandate is not the same as those of other New York based Funds and Programmes, yet its financing blend in terms of the balance of regular to other resources increasingly resembles that of a Fund and Programme. This is of concern, since UN-Women's ability to carry out its normative support and United Nations system coordination functions is dependent specifically on regular resources. While UN-Women is comparable to its sister entities in terms of the basic value of regular resources for operational costs, agility and other such considerations, its mandate makes the appropriate ratio of regular to other resources different since a larger part of that mandate relies on and is primarily delivered with regular resources. Given this, UN-Women estimates that a minimum of 40 per cent of regular resources is necessary for UN-Women financing to be compatible with its mandate, and further considers 50 per cent to be optimal. Going forward, increasing regular resources will be a key determinant of UN-Women's capacity to deliver on the triple mandate given ten years ago by the General Assembly.

Figure II
Target and actual regular resources revenue as a proportion of total voluntary contributions, 2015–2021



17. To address the imbalance between regular and other resources, UN-Women is: strengthening the regular resources business case and increasing visibility for regular resources donors, including through the Regular Resources Report 2019 – “Forging Generation Equality now and in the future”, which highlights the results made possible with regular resources; engaging in timely and effective high-level annual consultations with Member State donors; diversifying partnerships; improving results reporting and overall support to the partnership value chain; and demonstrating UN-Women’s high return on investment and value for money in line with UN reform. UN-Women requests the continued support of its Executive Board as the Entity works with key government partners to safeguard a balanced share of regular resources that will enable operationalization of UN-Women’s normative support functions, UN system coordination and operational activities.

Resource expenditure and allocation for results

18. In 2019, total programme expenditure reached a record high of \$326 million, a 14 per cent increase from 2018 and a 44 per cent increase from 2015. The largest proportion of resources contributed to Strategic Plan Outcome 5 on women, peace and security and humanitarian response, followed by Outcome 4 on ending violence against women and girls, Outcome 2 on leadership and governance, Outcome 3 on economic empowerment and Outcome 1 on global norms and standards.

Table II
Other resources and programmable regular resources growth by outcome area of expenditure, 2015–2019

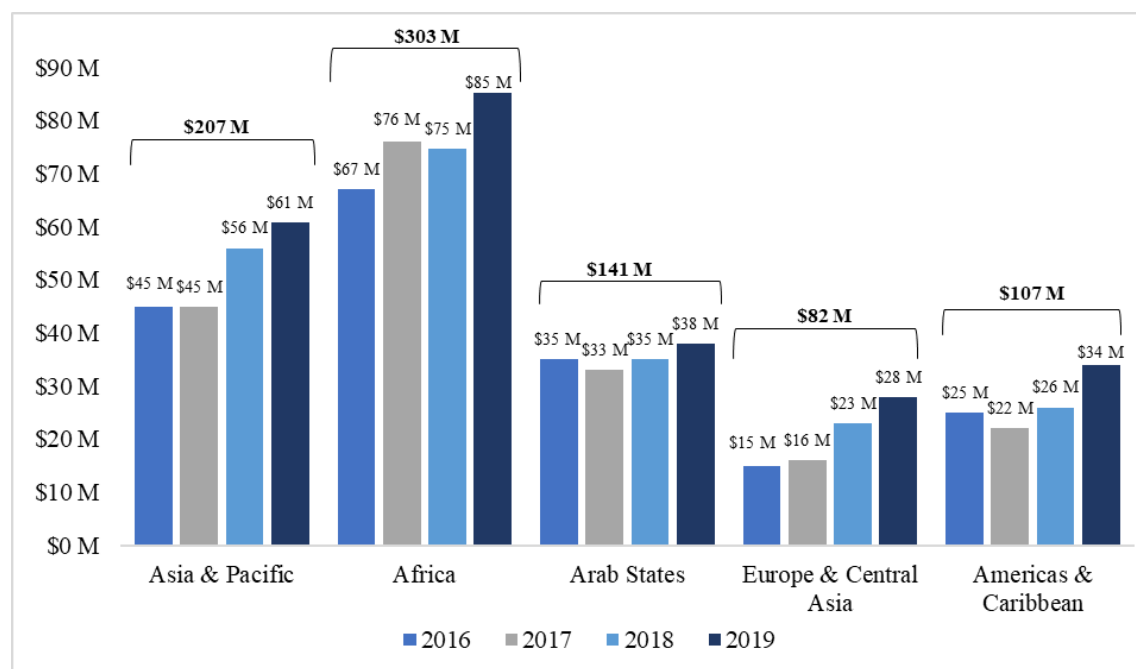
(millions of United States dollars)

Outcome area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Global norms and standards	9.41	6.05	2.64	16.26	24.71
Leadership and governance	29.93	39.36	31.50	60.43	60.54
Economic empowerment	49.23	53.65	50.44	42.03	53.96
Ending violence against women	59.78	73.62	78.38	77.52	76.39
National planning and budgeting ²	22.93	16.92	10.78		
Peace, security and humanitarian	41.68	64.42	75.68	89.44	110.53
Cross-cutting	12.31				
Total	225.27	254.02	249.42	285.68	326.13

19. Between 2016 and 2019 programme expenditure (other and programmable regular resources) in all regions followed an upward trajectory, growing by 14 per cent between 2018 and 2019 and by 31.5 per cent since 2016. In 2019 regional programme expenditure reached \$246 million, representing 75.5 per cent of overall programme expenditure.

Figure III
Programme expenses by region, 2016–2019

(millions of United States dollars)



² Gender-responsive budgeting and planning was integrated into the leadership and governance outcome area in the UN-Women strategic plan, 2018–2021.

Table III
Regional distribution of programme expenses by outcome area, 2019

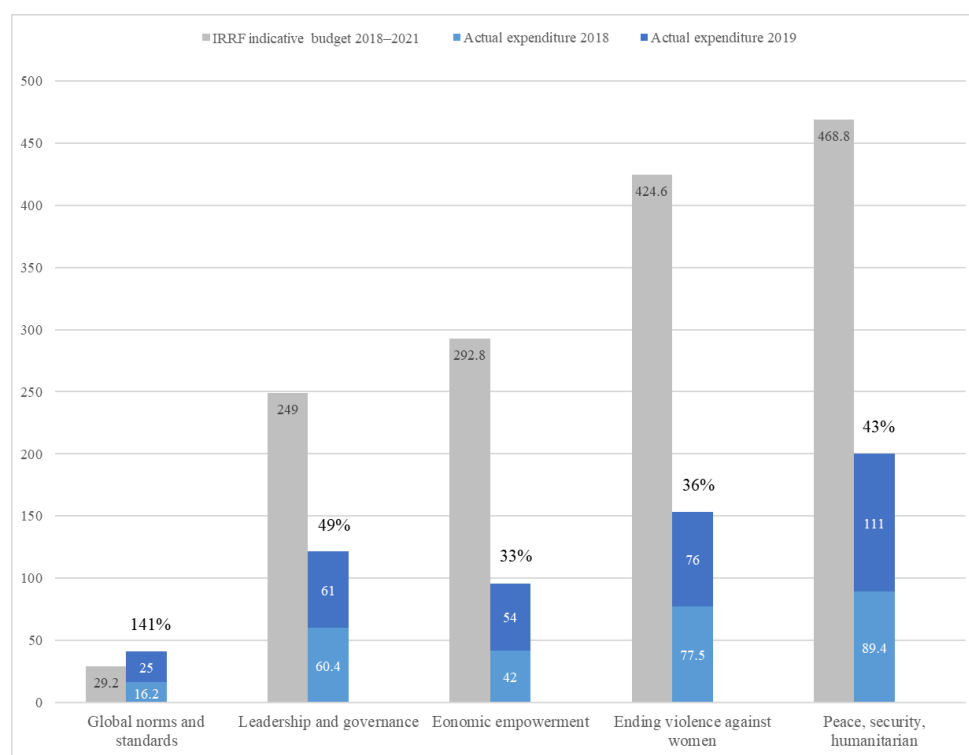
(millions of United States dollars)

<i>Outcome area</i>	<i>America & Caribbean</i>	<i>Arab States</i>	<i>Asia Pacific</i>	<i>East & Southern Africa</i>	<i>Europe & Central Asia</i>	<i>West & Central Africa</i>
Peace, security and humanitarian	7.07	23.27	18.05	11.73	6.83	15.39
Ending violence against women	8.50	6.37	18.02	\$10.81	9.16	3.51
Economic empowerment	9.95	2.73	10.10	10.59	3.70	5.27
Leadership and governance	5.46	2.36	8.69	17.34	7.59	6.96
Global norms and standards	2.71	3.86	5.87	3.23	0.73	0.49

20. The integrated results and resources framework of the Strategic Plan estimated an allocation of resources per outcome area for the four-year period of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The distribution of actual expenditure by outcome area for the biennium 2018–2019 against the four-year indicative allocation is presented in the figure below. Expenses in the first two years of the Strategic Plan range from 33 to 141 per cent of indicative budget projections.

Figure IV
Indicative planned allocation of resources 2018–2021³ and expenditure per strategic plan outcome biennium 2018–2019

(millions of United States dollars)



³ The 2018–2021 integrated results and resources framework is the four-year resource projection endorsed by the Executive Board in 2017. The Executive Board endorsed biennium integrated budgets (2018–2019 and 2020–2021) are the two-year resource projections. There is variance between the integrated results and resources framework and the integrated budgets due to the planning period and timing of these documents that took into account income developments and trends at different points in time.

21. By the end of 2019, expenditure of \$41.2 million on global norms and standards (Outcome 1) had surpassed the four-year estimated expenditure of \$29.2 million given high demand for UN-Women investment in this area. In addition to UN-Women's role in supporting the Commission on the Status of Women, the Entity's mandate ensures central support to Member States and intergovernmental bodies in developing and strengthening global norms and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment; engagement with relevant stakeholders, such as civil society; and policy analysis, such as in the lead up to the Beijing +25 anniversary.

22. Expenditures in support of leadership and governance (Outcome 2) and peace, security and humanitarian response (Outcome 5) are largely in line with the planned allocation of resources in the Strategic Plan, while voluntary contribution revenue investment in women's economic empowerment (Outcome 3) and ending violence against women (Outcome 4) are falling behind as of the Strategic Plan period half way point. UN-Women will work with resource partners to encourage investment in high-level result areas in line with the indicative projections in the integrated results and resources framework of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

23. Per the integrated results and resources framework, the planned outcome expenditure (or resource gap) for the remaining two years (2020–2021) of the Strategic Plan was \$851.7 million as of 31 December 2019 and is \$970 million against the integrated budget.⁴

Resources for results

24. Resource contributions to UN-Women enable critical progress for women and girls worldwide. UN-Women's work in leadership and governance supports capacity development of institutions, organizations and women in leadership positions; produces and disseminates up-to-date evidence and knowledge; provides high-quality technical assistance; contributes to the implementation of international standards; and encourages the transformation of social and gender norms. In 2019 UN-Women supported Member States with high-quality technical assistance to help ensure that nine national development strategies were gender-responsive, mainstreaming gender equality in situation analyses, development priorities, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. UN-Women increased awareness throughout the United Nations system and in countries on how violence against women in politics impedes women's participation in public life, and helped develop 17 new violence monitoring initiatives in 2019. UN-Women also continued to assist women to gain access to their rights, and through its field presence and local partners helped 150,000 women benefit from legal aid.

25. With an additional \$850,000 in regular resources in 2019 to support leadership and governance work, UN-Women would have made greater progress on all 2019 milestones to help ensure that women lead, participate, and benefit equally from governance systems. With \$5 million over three years, UN-Women could have begun to support 15 more national governments to develop and implement gender-responsive governance and national planning together with the International Monetary Fund, and as part of the United Nations reform process, could have more extensively leveraged coordinated United Nations support to national governments on governance and national planning for UN-Women to provide leadership and expertise. With an additional \$2 million in 2019, UN-Women could have ensured that the rights and needs of indigenous and minority women are effectively integrated into programming, across the priorities of the Strategic Plan. With an extra \$9 million it would be possible to ensure that rights-based national and local sexual, reproductive,

⁴ The two-year resource projection of the integrated budget 2020–2021 is for \$970 million (\$400 million in regular resources and \$570 million in other resources). Also see footnote above.

maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health frameworks in 36 countries are aligned with global normative frameworks including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Sustainable Development Goals; as well as relevant discriminatory laws and policies are reformed.

26. The response to COVID-19 shines light on the critical role of women's leadership and participation, as women leaders are at the helm of effective and inclusive COVID-19 responses, from the highest levels of decision-making to frontline service delivery. There is an opportunity to take advantage of Beijing+25 and Generation Equality, the focus on women's participation in public life and decision making at CSW 65, and women's leadership in COVID-19 response to fast-track change in 2020-2021 and secure the resources needed to achieve gender balance in decision-making and gender-responsive governance, national planning and laws.

27. Decent work and social protection are fundamental to realizing women's economic and social rights and well-being and boosting the productivity of economies at large. Yet women still occupy a disproportionate share of poor-quality jobs, endure a longstanding gender pay gap, and shoulder an unfair burden of unpaid care and domestic work. Drawing together diverse partnerships, from grassroots women's groups to international development banks, UN-Women helps connect more women to economic opportunities, assets and outcomes. In 2019, UN-Women's technical support and advocacy to governments and national stakeholders led to the adoption of 24 legal, regulatory and policy frameworks on decent work for women in 12 countries and 18 policy frameworks on gender-responsive social protection system. Since 2018 UN-Women has helped 54 more countries to develop, reform and implement legal and policy frameworks on women's land rights and tenure security.

28. UN-Women spent \$54 million on women's economic empowerment initiatives in 79 countries; however, a shortfall of \$20 million in regular resources compromised the Entity's reach in several ways, including its ability to meet extensive demands from governments and multilateral and bilateral development partners to translate normative and global policy instruments into actionable economic empowerment programming in the field. With an additional \$20 million, UN-Women could have expanded policy and advisory support to increase programming on: gender-responsive climate-resilient agriculture; legal and policy change to advance women's rights to land and tenure security; gender-responsive sustainable energy solutions; and the mobilization of women farmers and their organizations. In addition, UN-Women could have costed the care economy and leveraged macroeconomic policy levers in order to strengthen legal and policy frameworks for decent work in 164 countries and address unpaid care and domestic work in 66 countries by the end of 2021. UN-Women could have also deepened access to financial services access; created more opportunities for entrepreneurship; and supported the creation of gender-responsive migration policies and services. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of the world's economic systems with disproportionate impact on women and girls and clarified that the formal economy is only possible because it is subsidized by women's unpaid work. The collective crisis response and recovery must build partnerships and ensure investments in sustainable economies and increase progress to guarantee women's economic and social rights, livelihoods and resilience.

29. To end violence against women, UN-Women strengthens legislation and policies; improves the quality of services for survivors; addresses social norms to prevent violence; establishes safe and empowering public spaces; and supports advocacy efforts by the women's movement. In 2019 UN-Women supported evidence-based prevention interventions, through national prevention strategies,

grass-roots mobilization and educational curricula. To ensure a high-quality police and judicial system response for all women, UN-Women led the United Nations system in strengthening investigations of crimes of violence against women by law enforcement. Thirteen new safe cities and safe public spaces partnerships were established in 2019 to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in public spaces.

30. Funding constraints in this area limit the ability to: improve women's safety in rural communities and their roles in agricultural value chains; undertake a deeper analysis on the intersectionality of violence; address sexual harassment against women in public spaces, including online; and strengthen policy support to middle-income countries that do not receive development financial assistance but face extremely high levels of femicide and other forms of violence against women. In 2019, with an additional \$12 million, UN-Women could have addressed gaps in safe cities urban programmes with high population density in two regions and provided seed support for safe rural community initiatives and policy and programme action on safe online settings for women. With an additional \$12 million, 10 countries would have received support to develop comprehensive national violence prevention strategies and UN-Women could have pivoted programming in 20 countries to invest in women's economic empowerment and social protection, as one of the most promising evidence-based strategies to prevent violence from occurring in the context of COVID-19, which highlights that the root causes of violence against women are universal and persist in low-, middle- and high-income countries.

31. In 2019, UN-Women combined its work on peace, security and humanitarian action to provide comprehensive support across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. UN-Women's partnership with the Peacebuilding Support Office is a good practice that played a key role in advancing inclusive peacebuilding, including through 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, and 40 per cent (around \$77 million) contributed to gender equality. The Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund mobilized over \$40 million since its inception, with close to \$19 million raised in 2019 alone, to directly support women's organizations. The Fund, for which UN-Women is the Secretariat, actively supports over 100 grassroots civil-society organizations across 12 conflict and crisis-affected settings. In response to COVID-19, the Fund established a Crisis Response Window to support local organizations to prevent and respond to the short and longer-term impact of the pandemic.

32. The Secretary-General has urged all actors to finance the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 and invest in women peacebuilders ([S/2019/800](#)). Work on peace, security and humanitarian action is the Strategic Plan area with the highest level of expenditure, yet much of the work to date has been reliant on other resources, which weakens sustainability. With a \$3 million increase in regular resources dedicated to the realization of the women, peace and security agenda and the gender-specific commitments of the world humanitarian summit, UN-Women would be able to improve knowledge management, document good practices and disseminate lessons learned. UN-Women would also be able to ensure the sustainability of the Security Council Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security, established by Security Council resolution 2122, for which UN-Women acts as the secretariat. In the context of United Nations development system and peace and security reforms, an additional \$3 million would enable UN-Women to provide increased coordination, normative and technical support on gender equality and women's leadership in humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction to the United Nations system and partners worldwide to accelerate achievement of Agenda 2030. This would result in more inclusive, gender-responsive and therefore more effective

structures and processes that reduce women's exposure and vulnerability and leverage their capacity and potential, enabling women to recover from crisis and build community resilience to future crisis.

Transparency and accountability

33. UN-Women investments in accountability and transparency, including to institutionalize results-based management and improve the collection of high-quality data, have continued to produce a steady rise in its score under the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

34. UN-Women has been a member of IATI since 2015, with steadfast commitment to report and build shared commitment to transparency. UN-Women engages in various IATI taskforces and working groups, including on alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and support for the development of tools and use of data from a gender perspective.

35. In the last 12 months UN-Women has implemented changes to automate reporting to IATI, successfully increasing the Entity's score in terms of timeliness, being forward-looking and comprehensiveness. UN-Women contributed to the development of the results framework for the IATI 2020–2025 Strategic Plan, to promote gender equality and “leave no one behind” aspects and to reinforce efforts to track the quality and use of IATI data and the strength of community engagement. These efforts have raised UN-Women's IATI score to 85 in 2020 from 16 in 2016.

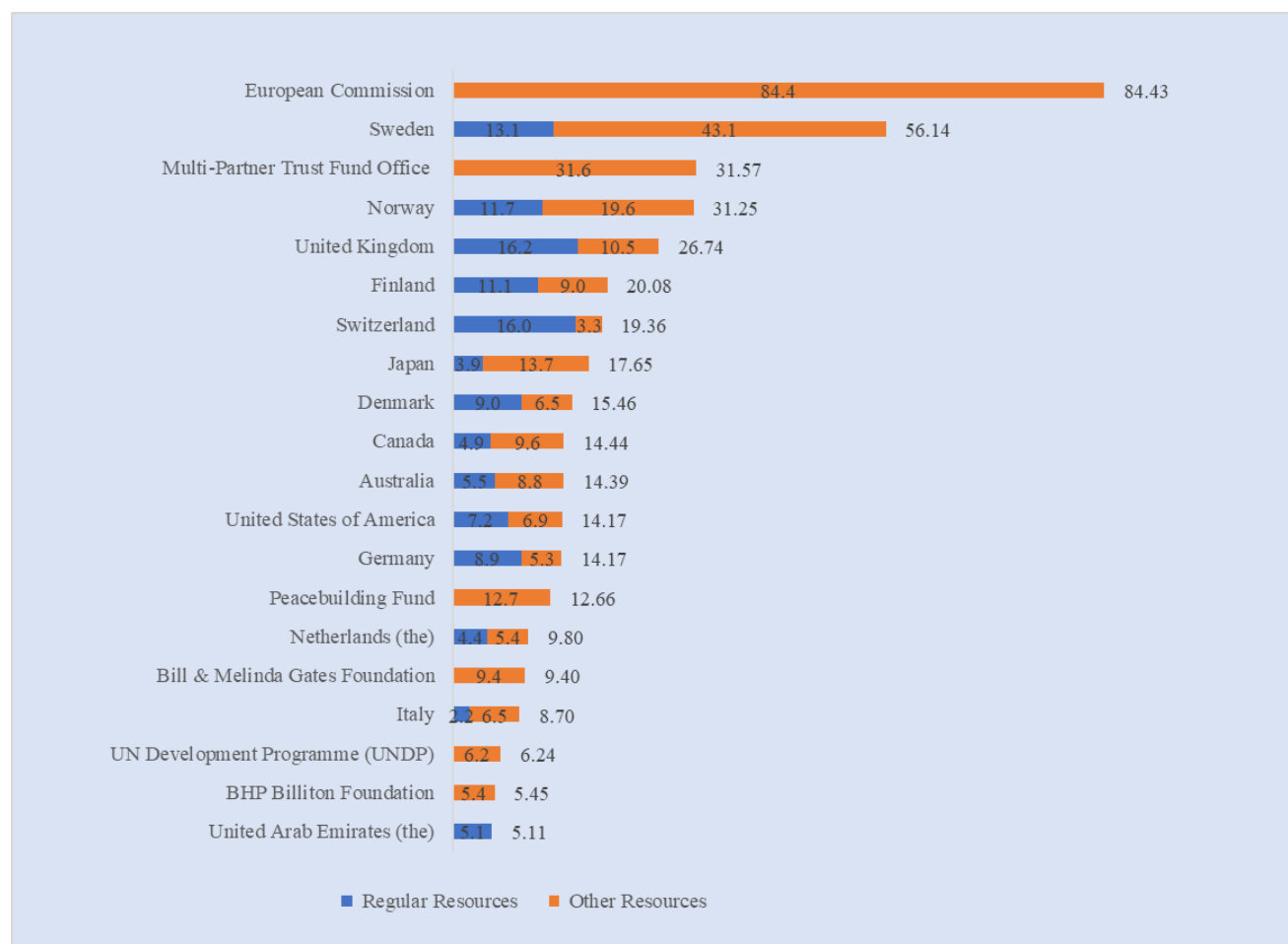
36. In 2020, the UN-Women 2019 Strategic Plan Data Portal is being replaced with a Transparency and Results Gateway, integrated with UN-Women Data Hub resources, allowing to further explore global and field data and more comprehensive information on how UN-Women uses its resources to achieve concrete results.

III. Flexible and predictable investments

37. Funding that is flexible and predictable is the most strategic investment that partners can make in the shared pursuit of the Entity's mandate.

38. The top 20 UN-Women resource partners contributed \$417.2 million or an 82 per cent share of total voluntary contributions. The European Commission was the single largest contributor in 2019 with other resources contributions totalling \$84.4 million, of which the largest proportion of \$59.2 million supports the Spotlight Initiative. While 15 of UN-Women's top 20 contributors are Member States and the European Commission, the list also includes interagency partners such as the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, and private sector foundations including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the BHP Billiton Foundation.

Figure V
Top 20 resource partners, 2019
(millions of United States dollars)



39. In 2019, 218 partners contributed to UN-Women, up from 199 in 2018, demonstrating a continued broad base of commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment and support for the Entity. Fifty-three per cent (116 of 218) of contributing partners were Member States, with 106 Member States contributing to regular resources and 39 contributing other resources to the Entity. Member States are UN-Women's most reliable and valuable partnership segment. Member States accounted for 98 per cent of regular resources, with the remaining 2 per cent of regular resources revenue, equivalent to \$2.36 million, generated by 14 National Committees. Member States together with the European Commission accounted for 69 per cent (or \$249.8 million) of other resources contributions. Among UN-Women's top ten Member State contributors of other resources, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, Denmark and Canada provided increased other resources contributions in 2019 compared to 2018.

40. A total of 139 donors contributed other resources in 2019. Alongside 39 Member States, and the European Commission, UN-Women received other resources from 99 partners, representing wide-ranging donor segments. This includes, among others, multilateral partners⁵ that contributed \$84.8 million in 2019, up from \$50.7 million

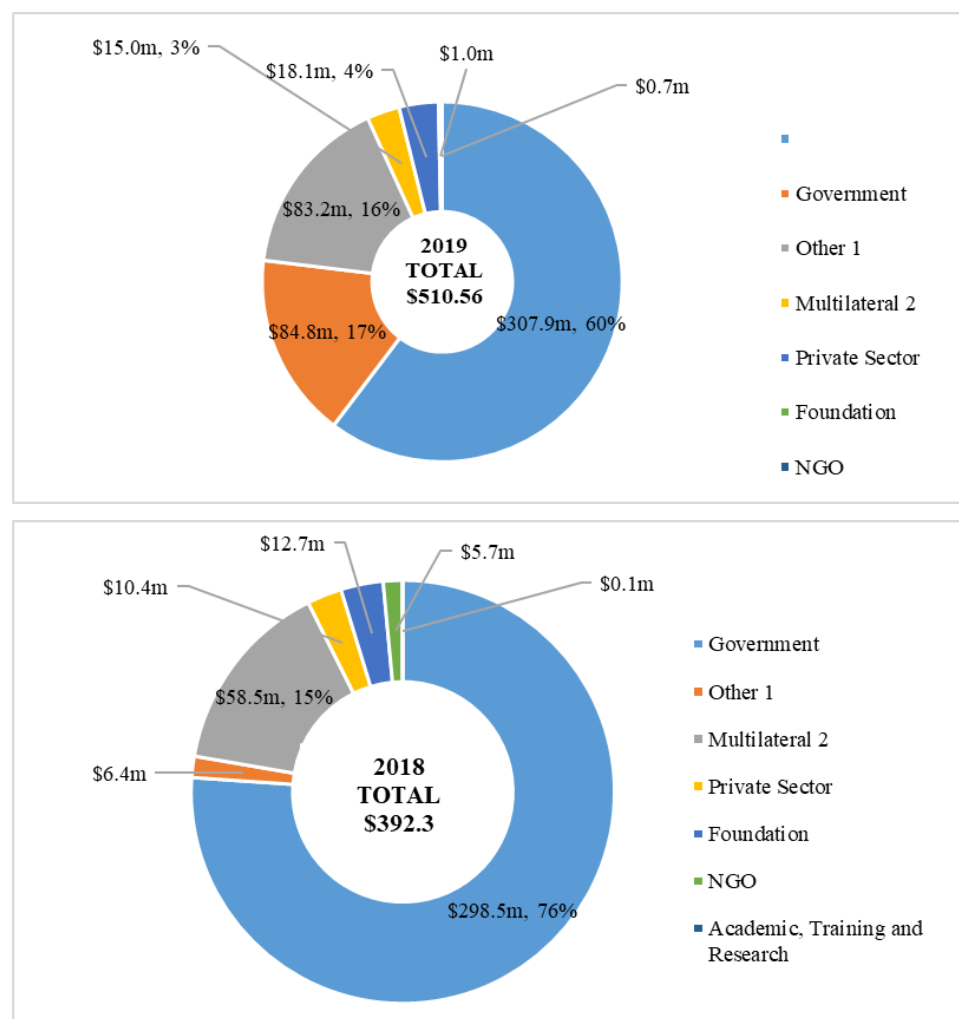
⁵ International Financial Institutions, UN organizations and UN inter-agency pooled funds.

in 2018; foundations, which contributed \$18.1 million in 2019, up from \$12.7 million in 2018; and private sector partners⁶ that contributed \$12.6 million, up from \$9 million in 2018; within this category UN-Women National Committees contributed \$5 million in other resources in 2019, up from \$4.2 million in 2018.

Figure VI

Contributions by funding channel, 2018 and 2019⁷

(millions of United States dollars)



Flexible funding in support of Strategic Plan results

41. Regular resources are considered the highest quality funding available because they are fully flexible, or unrestricted. In complement to regular resources, high-quality other resources that are loosely earmarked offer greater flexibility to direct funds where they are most needed with greater predictability, allowing entities to

⁶ The private sector is the part of the economy, sometimes referred to as the citizen sector, which is run by private individuals or groups, usually as a means of enterprise for profit, and is not controlled by the State.

⁷ In line with UNDG Data Standards, “Other 1” includes contributions from the European Commission and other organizations such as the African Union. “Multilateral 2” includes International Financial Institutions, United Nations organizations and transfers from United Nations inter-agency pooled funds.

respond more efficiently and effectively, facilitating longer-term planning and sustainability, in addition to savings in transaction, management and reporting costs, resulting in a larger percentage of funds going towards programming. Thematic funds are an example of high-quality other resources and a key flexible financing instrument supporting high-level results at country, regional and global levels, aligned with Strategic Plan outcomes. As such, UN-Women will propose the establishment of thematic funds in its next Strategic Plan.

42. The Swedish International Development Agency's longstanding support to UN-Women through the Strategic Partnership Framework is a best practice example of a flexible funding arrangement. Now in its second phase, this dynamic framework is built on shared priorities, good performance and responsible financial stewardship. By channelling funds directly to UN-Women's Strategic Plan outcome areas, the Strategic Partnership Framework supports global and field level normative support, United Nations system coordination and operational work, and has been critical in strengthening UN-Women capacity in these areas, through most recently, a \$38 million agreement for the four-year period 2017–2020. The flexibility of the framework allows UN-Women to support the strengthening of capacities where they are most needed for both organizational growth and local context needs. The framework allows UN-Women to strategically plan and flexibly invest resources at the thematic level in priority areas of work in programme countries, and results in management efficiency gains and reduced transaction costs.

43. UN-Women Flagship Programme Initiatives offer partners the opportunity to support high-level transformative results in line with Strategic Plan 2018–2021 output areas. For example, the flagship programme *Making Every Women and Girl Count* is working to ensure that better gender statistics are available for the Sustainable Development Goals to measure progress and contribute to evidence-based policies and solutions. Given that 80 per cent of the indicators for gender equality across the Sustainable Development Goals are lacking data, the programme aims to bring about a radical shift in how gender statistics are used, created and promoted, and is addressing the urgent need for accurate information on gender equality. This ground-breaking five-year (2016–2020) public-private partnership is funded by the Governments of Australia, Ireland, the United States and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and is working in partnership with national statistical offices, regional commissions, international agencies, private foundations, civil society and academia.

44. The European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative is a global partnership to end violence against women. Through the European Union seed investment of Euro 500 million UN-Women is one of several implementing United Nations agencies working with partner governments and civil society around the globe to address gender-based violence in all its forms. From addressing domestic violence in the Pacific region, to ending femicide in Latin America, female trafficking and labour exploitation in Asia and sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices in Africa, the Spotlight Initiative is flexibly funding concrete action in line with national priorities and UN-Women's mandate.

45. Funding UN-Women country-level Strategic Notes offers flexibility through soft-earmarking in support of UN-Women's programmes at country level, aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and national priorities.

46. The Strategic Partnership Framework with Sweden, UN-Women Flagship Programme Initiatives, the Spotlight Initiative and country and multi-country Strategic Notes are representative of flexible funding modalities through which partners can invest in and support the achievement of Strategic Plan outcomes. In line

with the Funding Compact, UN-Women will continue to encourage increased investment in flexible and predictable financing arrangements.

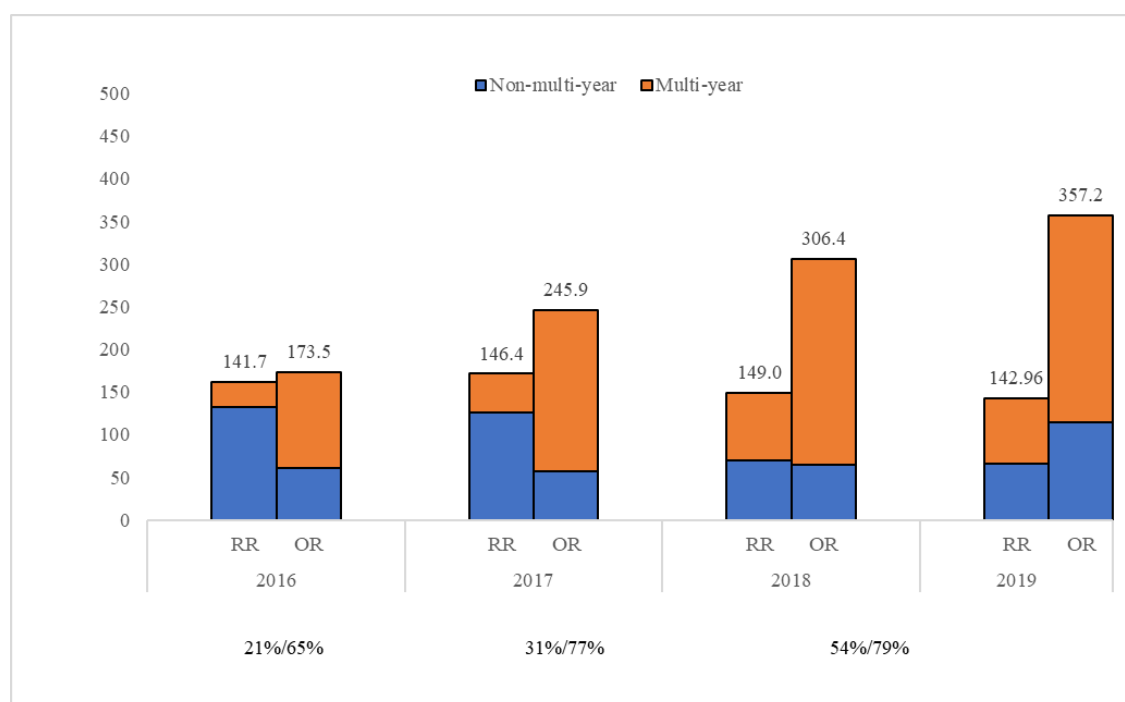
Multi-year funding agreements

47. Multi-year commitments are efficient and effective instruments that improve the predictability of revenue streams and lead to quicker response times and longer-term programme planning and implementation. In 2019, the annual value share of regular resources multi-year commitments stood at 54 per cent, the same as in 2018 and up from 21 per cent in 2016. Seven new multi-year regular resources agreements were signed in 2019. Among UN-Women's top five regular resource partners both Finland and Norway signed new regular resources agreements in 2019, while Sweden, the United Kingdom and Switzerland signed multi-year agreements in 2018. The proportion of multi-year other resources agreements grew from 24.5 per cent in 2016 to 53 per cent in 2019. The value share of other resources programme funding agreements that are multi-year stood at 68 per cent in 2019, up from just 7 per cent in 2016 but down from 79 percent in 2018.

Figure VII

Proportional value of multi-year funding agreements by resource type, 2016–2019⁸

(millions of United States dollars)



⁸ Total commitment value for regular resources includes multi-year agreements signed with Member States, as well as pledges, and represents the total contributions received in a given year. For other resources, total value is the amount of an agreement (including pledges, framework arrangements, letters and agreements) in the year in which the agreement was signed. In cases in which an agreement is concluded for an amount in a currency other than United States dollars, the future revenue is calculated based on the United Nations operational rate of exchange of December 2019.

Scale of funding investments

48. Between 2016 and 2019 the average regular resources commitment value has been relatively stable. In 2019 the average regular resources commitment value was \$1.2 million, down 7 per cent from \$1.3 million in 2018. The average other resources agreement value stood at \$1.37 million in 2019, up by 11 per cent from \$1.23 million in 2018 and 90 per cent from \$0.7 million in 2016.

Table IV

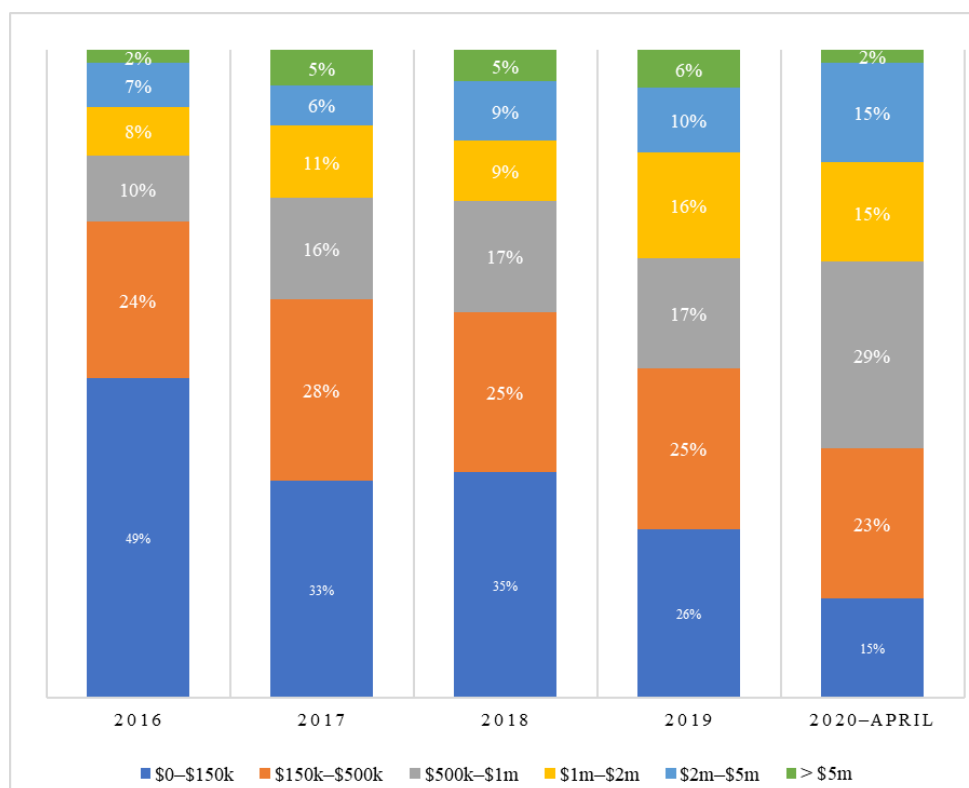
Average value of regular resources commitments and other resources agreements 2016–2019

(millions of United States dollars)

		2016	2017	2018	2019
Regular resources	Total commitment value	\$141.6	\$146.4	\$149.0	\$142.9
	Number of commitments	115	119	115	119
	Average commitment value	\$1.23	\$1.23	\$1.3	\$1.2
Other resources	Total agreement value	\$173.5	\$245.9	\$306.4	\$357.2
	Number of agreements	248	235	250	261
	Average agreement value	\$0.7	\$1.05	\$1.23	\$1.37

49. UN-Women is signing higher-value other resources agreements with its contributors. Lower-value agreements of up to \$150,000 have been declining since 2016, from a high of 49 per cent in that year to 26 per cent in 2019 and representing 15 per cent as of April 2020. On the other hand, higher-value agreements are generally on an upward trajectory. The highest value range of agreements of over \$5 million has increased from 2 per cent of UN-Women's other resource programme portfolio in 2016 to 6 per cent in 2019. Larger scale other resources programme investments provide UN-Women and funding partners with economies of scale, allowing, for example, fixed costs to be distributed over a larger programming base in support of higher-level strategic results.

Figure VIII
Proportion of other resource agreements by amount, 2016–April 2020



Inter-agency pooled funding

50. United Nations inter-agency pooled funds (including One UN Funds, Trust Funds and joint programmes) refer to a funding mechanism with the following characteristics:⁹

1. The pooled fund is designed to support a clear programmatic purpose and results framework through contributions, usually received from more than one contributor, that are co-mingled, not earmarked to a specific United Nations entity and held by a United Nations fund administrator.
2. Decisions on programme allocations are made by a United Nations-led governance mechanism, taking into account the programmatic purpose and results purpose of the fund.
3. Fund implementing is fully or largely entrusted to United Nations entities that assume the programmatic and financial accountability for resources.
4. Appointment of a single United Nations administrative interface with donors and participating United Nations organizations to administer the pooled fund.

51. Pooled fund modalities provide flexible and predictable earmarked funding for agreed programme priorities and “are a result of efforts by the international community to promote coherence, alignment and aid effectiveness, counterbalancing

⁹ United Nations MPTF Office and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, Guidance Note for UN Country Teams, UN Country-level Pooled Funds, 2020. See: <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Guidance-Country-Level-Pooled-Funds.pdf>.

high fragmentation because of the predominantly single-donor and single-programme and project-specific nature of non-core resource flows”.¹⁰

52. UN-Women inter-agency arrangement revenue from United Nations agencies has grown by 83.7 per cent over five years, from \$39.4 million in 2015 to \$72.4 million in 2019. This is not inclusive of an additional \$59.2 million received in 2019 from the European Commission for the Spotlight Initiative. Gender equality is the area with the highest level of collaboration under the Common Chapter of the UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women Strategic Plans, and within the broader United Nations system joint programming. According to recent analysis, UN-Women participated in over 300 joint programmes in 2019 and 14 per cent of total programme expenditure, or \$45.7 million of \$326 million was expended on joint programmes, which almost met the Strategic Plan an annual milestone of 15 per cent. The increase in revenue received through inter-agency arrangements is the product of sustained input in and development of joint programmes, as well as UN-Women’s thought leadership and role in UN system coordination.

53. The Secretary-General’s 2019 report on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system (E/2019/54) recommends to enhance financing for gender equality in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through pooled funding for collective, integrated action at the country level to support impact at scale.

IV. Key turning points for investing in gender equality and women’s empowerment

COVID-19

54. UN-Women is driving gender mainstreaming in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and requires flexible funding investments to ensure its continued ability to fulfil its mandate in addressing the disproportionate effects COVID-19 is having on women and girls globally.

55. The global COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health issue. It is a profound shock to economies and societies worldwide. Women are front-line responders, health professionals, community volunteers, transport and logistics managers, scientists and more, but are also the majority of caregivers at home and in communities. Women are making critical contributions on a daily basis to address the outbreak, which puts them at increased risk of infection, while they face loss of livelihoods and an increased risk of domestic violence. In this context, UN-Women is providing policy advice and engaging in programmatic interventions as part of the broader United Nations system response.

56. Regular resources are invaluable in a crisis. They enable UN-Women to respond flexibly and quickly, allocating funds when and where they are needed most. As the COVID-19 crisis emerged, UN-Women pivoted to contribute to the response through policy engagement and support to governments, civil society and the private sector; programmatic action; United Nations coordination; and tools and guidance development. Much of this is normative work, which is largely funded through regular resources. While reprogramming of other resources is dependent on agreements with specific donors, regular resources can be most easily reprioritized within the scope of the Strategic Plan.

¹⁰ United Nations Development Group, Discussion Paper: The Role of UN Pooled Financing Mechanisms to deliver the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. See: <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-Paper-on-Pooled-Financing-for-Agenda-2030.pdf>.

57. UN-Women is grateful to its partners that have made 2020 regular resource payments early in the year, including the Governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. As a mostly voluntary-funded organization, UN-Women encourages all partners to support the Entity with regular resources provided early in the year. Timely and early payments enable more efficient management of UN-Women activities and reduces the risk of currency fluctuations.

United Nations reform and pooled funding

58. The Funding Compact is a key element of the United Nations development system reform. With the adoption of the Funding Compact, Member States have asked the United Nations development system to do more and better in interagency pooled funding. UN-Women also sees pooled funding as an important entry point to mainstream gender equality into joint initiatives and has participated actively in a number of recent, newly developed pooled funding arrangements, such as the Joint SDG Fund and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund (including in the formulation phase). The Peacebuilding Fund has developed a specific gender strategy and has in place a mandatory gender marker. In 2018, the Peacebuilding Fund exceeded the target set out in the Strategic Plan of investing 30 per cent of its total budget in gender-responsive peacebuilding by 10 per cent. The Peacebuilding Fund has been used as an important benchmark for other pooled funds. The most recent example is the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. UN-Women is an ex-officio member of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund advisory committee and has been able to ensure that a mandatory gender marker is in place for the fund.

59. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework is another flagship element of United Nations reform, recognized as the most important country-level planning and operational instrument. The Cooperation Framework guidance clearly stipulates that gender equality is a guiding principle that should be applied at all steps of the framework's cycle. Based on review of the first round of Common Country Assessments and Cooperation Frameworks, it is possible to identify that gender analysis is of higher quality and leading to a more coherent foundation for operationalizing gender mainstreaming in the work of United Nations Country Teams. Regular resources enable UN-Women to invest in influencing these frameworks at country level, alongside the roll out and implementation of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard.

60. Cooperation Frameworks have proven a good basis to establish country-level pooled funds. This includes country-level pooled funds for joint programming, which provide the assurance of greater coherence among United Nations entities in delivering results and with reduced transaction costs. There is growing demand for their use among national and international partners, with over 27 active country-level pooled funds as of May 2020.¹¹

61. Gender equality joint programming is an important cooperation modality in the United Nations system that supports governments to meet normative commitments, is instrumental in bringing gender equality issues into national dialogue, and spurs positive policy and real-life changes for women and girls. This instrument should be prioritized to promote the achievement of gender equality.

¹¹ Guidance Note for UN Country Teams: UN Country-level Pooled Funds A financing instrument to invest in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, 2020, United Nations Sustainable Development Group. See: <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Guidance-Country-Level-Pooled-Funds.pdf>.

62. UN-Women Strategic Notes are planning tools for UN-Women's programmes at the country level. In cases where single-agency implementation is preferable based on comparative advantage, investing in Strategic Notes supports delivery of national and United Nations system-wide gender equality and women's empowerment priorities. This is particularly relevant given that evidence continues to point to insufficient financing of gender equality among United Nations Country Teams and the wider United Nations system. According to a 2019 Secretary-General's report (E/2019/54), only 2.03 per cent of United Nations development system expenditure is allocated to gender equality and women's empowerment. Of the United Nations Country Teams that completed the System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard by 2018, the lowest ranked scoring was on the "resource allocation and tracking" indicator, with just 4 per cent of total ratings meeting or exceeding requirements.

VI. Conclusion

63. UN-Women is grateful to its funding partners for their contributions in 2019 that enabled strategic results for women and girls. Bilateral consultations and formal and informal structured dialogues on financing with funding partners provide critical opportunities for UN-Women and its partners to work together to secure the flexible and predictable resources required to achieve results for women and girls as set out in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, in line with the ambition of the Funding Compact.

64. Structured dialogues are taking place in the context of the Funding Compact to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda that clarifies the interdependent responsibilities and commitments of Member States to align funding to entity requirements, provide stability and facilitate coherence and efficiency and the United Nations development system to accelerate results, improve transparency and accountability and increase efficiencies.

65. Executive Board decision UNW/2019/11 requested that UN-Women present "options on improving the quality of the Structured Dialogue on Financing." In 2020 UN-Women continued to work in partnership with Member States to identify approaches to the structured dialogues that: strengthen links between results and resources; align financing dialogues with the Funding Compact; enable participatory dialogue; encourage diverse perspectives; and ensure continuity of dialogues. At the same time, in recognition that United Nations agencies are stronger together and can learn from one another, UN-Women is working hand in hand with other agencies to harmonize approaches to structured funding dialogues and Funding Compact reporting, as part of its commitment to the United Nations reform agenda.

66. While UN-Women is appreciative of the significant increase in other resources revenue in 2019, the Entity is eager to work closely with its major funding partners to address the declining share of regular resources, which dropped below the Funding Compact threshold of 30 percent in 2019. Now in the biennium period 2020–2021, for which the annual regular resource integrated budget has been set at a relatively conservative \$200 million to support UN-Women's normative support functions, UN system coordination and operational activities, the Entity seeks continued support for the financing of its work to support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

VII. Elements of a decision

67. The Executive Board may wish to:

(a) Take note of this report, the *Structured Dialogue on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2018–2021* (UNW 2020/7);

(b) *Recognize* the improvements UN-Women has made to structured dialogues on financing and encourage UN-Women to continue engaging in structured dialogues with all Member States throughout the year;

(c) *Emphasize* the importance of flexible and predictable funding, including through multi-year commitments and whenever possible, through payments made early in the year;

(d) *Note* the declining level of regular resources as a share of voluntary contribution revenue, which in 2019 fell below the Funding Compact threshold of 30 per cent;

(e) *Encourage* all Member States in a position to do so, to increase their voluntary contributions to UN-Women, especially to its regular resources to enable UN-Women to fully carry out its normative support, UN system coordination and operational mandate;

(f) *Recognize* the disproportionate burdens that women and girls are facing in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated socio-economic downturn and encourage targeted investments in gender equality and women's empowerment, with a preference for doing so through strengthening UN-Women's regular resources, as well as through flexible pooled interagency funding arrangement.
