



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

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Organizational matters

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

Summary

The 2020 Executive Director's annual report highlights results achieved by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in the third year of its Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The report presents progress amid the devastating COVID-19 pandemic; showcases achievements 10 years since UN-Women's inception; and reflects on challenges, opportunities and implications from the current changing development context, the 25-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the reforms of the United Nations development system, and the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A draft decision is included in section VII.



I. Introduction

1. UN-Women's tenth report on progress in implementing its Strategic Plan takes us purposefully and with mature accomplishment into the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs. I am proud of the strides made to achieve real change in women's and girls' lives, with significantly improved scale and impact, and results that are effectively and concretely captured and reported. UN-Women has expanded its partnership base to build a committed and better coordinated constituency of support, helped advance global norms and standards, and generated cutting-edge knowledge to inform policies, laws, programmes and national budgets to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

2. Nevertheless, gender equality gains and our common goals remain under almost universal pressure, in some cases linked to wider political developments and promoted by well-funded and far-reaching global coalitions, which are increasingly calling into question international human rights law and multilateral cooperation. These trends are an unprecedented threat to a progressive agenda for gender equality, as well as to sustainable development, including social and climate justice. Our work on promoting and entrenching positive social norms takes on increased urgency in this context as well as the expanded constituency of those working with us, including youth, religious and traditional leaders, and dedicated private sector influencers like the Unstereotype Alliance and HeForShe's IMPACT Champions who demonstrate the vital role men and boys play in progress.

3. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the chronic structural weaknesses of current systems and exacerbated existing gender inequalities across all aspects of life especially for the most vulnerable. Increased reported violence by men against women and girls, contractions in economic activity disproportionately affecting women and decreased visibility and voice in decision-making and representation in key institutions remain of especially deep concern and demand even greater catalytic coordination.

4. UN-Women's responses to COVID-19 rapidly focused on both informed, immediate relief and collaborative long-term solutions, drawing on specialized knowledge and expertise: publishing seminal data; developing highly influential expert policy briefs, urging action to address gender-based violence and support survivors, and make stimulus packages gender-responsive, recognizing disproportionately high job losses for women, whilst delivering targeted support through its 88 field offices. Repurposed funds supported swift transitions to a virtual environment and safe forms of support; and strengthened engagement with international financial institutions presented avenues to advocate for gender equality considerations in their COVID-19 responses.

5. UN-Women ensured business continuity with impressive results in 2020, including exceeding \$500 million in revenues. It supported 95 countries and territories, achieving good performance for 83 per cent of all assessable Strategic Plan indicators. There was significant progress towards delivering more impactful results through a repositioned United Nations development system with a strong focus on gender equality in the United Nations framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 and the related COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. Review of the functions and typologies of offices continued through the change management process, and global support was enhanced.

6. 2020 saw multiple major anniversaries and generation of political awareness and will: the Commission on the Status of Women's review and appraisal of the 25-year implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action resulted in a strong Political Declaration; more than 40 Heads of State and Government participated in the

related high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Beijing+25; the Security Council marked the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and the Executive Board celebrated UN-Women's tenth anniversary. While the Generation Equality Forum was postponed to 2021, 2020's efforts generated more energy, mobilization and commitments to concrete, transformative action.

7. The next Strategic Plan 2022–2025 stands on a strong foundation of results, resolve and relationships that can propel progress towards achieving gender equality by 2030, and a future that we build together to be green, equitable, gender-responsive and inclusive.

II. Achievements over 10 years

8. UN-Women was established in July 2010 and started operations in January 2011. In its 10 years of existence, UN-Women has achieved significant results in supporting Member States to strengthen global norms and standards, translate these norms into real change in the lives of women and girls, and enhance coherence and impact of the work of the UN system on gender equality and women's empowerment.

9. Over the last 10 years, gender equality issues gained increased attention in the global environment. In 2015, together with the People's Republic of China, UN-Women convened the first-ever meeting on gender equality and women's empowerment at the level of Heads of State and Government. In 2020, more than 40 leaders spoke at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Beijing+25, a remarkable increase from the Fourth World Conference on Women where only six countries were represented at this level. Media attention to gender equality issues has significantly increased around the world with gender equality now recognized as a key factor in political processes, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the economy and other sectors. The G7, G20 and other global or regional intergovernmental fora have placed gender equality and women's empowerment at the top of their agendas, which was not the case in 2010. While these advances are not always directly related to UN-Women's efforts, the Entity's work has contributed to heightening global attention to gender equality.

10. The last 10 years have also seen an acceleration of progress on some key indicators in areas especially impacting women's lives:

- The proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments increased from 19 to 25 per cent;
- The number of countries with gender balanced parliaments more than tripled, while the number of countries with severe women's underrepresentation almost halved;
- The share of peace agreements with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls increased from 22 to 25 per cent;
- The share of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly that integrate gender perspectives increased from 37 per cent to 47 per cent;
- Bilateral aid targeting gender equality in fragile or conflict-affected situations increased from \$12.1 billion in 2011-2012 to \$20.5 billion dollars in 2017–2018 (last years with data availability).

11. In addition, together with its partners, UN-Women directly contributed to the following results during the decade to create a more enabling environment for the realization of women's rights:

Global Norms and Standards

- The adoption of a stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as robust gender mainstreaming across the 2030 Agenda, through substantive support and targeted advocacy;
- The inclusion of strong gender equality perspectives in other major intergovernmental agreements, including Rio+20, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement, and others;
- More attention to women, peace and security through five additional dedicated Security Council resolutions;
- 9 successful outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women and the participation of nearly 35,000 civil society representatives;

Leadership and Governance

- An additional 30 countries adopted or implemented legislated gender quotas or constitutional provisions to increase women's representation in national parliaments and local governments;
- Over 25 constitutional reforms supported to strengthen women's rights;
- More than 24,000 aspiring women leaders and political candidates enhanced their campaigning and other skills;
- 55 National Development Strategies integrated a gender equality focus;
- 98 countries developed and implemented gender-responsive policies, plans and budgets;
- 80 countries strengthened national statistical systems and data collection to track gender equality;
- 89 countries, home to 3 billion women and girls, have stronger legal protection through over 700 legal reforms, half of which eliminated discriminatory laws;

Economic Empowerment

- 75 countries, home to 2.6 billion women and girls, have a stronger legal, regulatory and policy environment on women's economic empowerment;
- 4,445 companies signed the Women Empowerment Principles, up from 180;
- About 100,000 women per year enhanced skills to participate in the economy, including as entrepreneurs;
- Some 125,000 rural women, along with nearly 400,000 family members, benefitted from greater access to sustainable livelihoods and climate-resilient technologies and productive resources;

Ending Violence Against Women

- 96 countries, home to 2.9 billion women and girls, have strengthened legal and policy frameworks to prevent and respond to violence against women;
- 85 countries, home to 2.9 billion women and girls, have improved access to quality support services against violence;
- 1.6 million women and girls and 54.6 million people in the last five years alone reached through grants from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women;

Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action

- 95 countries or territories had adopted National Action Plans on women, peace and security, up from 19;
- A nearly three-fold increase in the allocation of funding to UN peacebuilding projects promoting gender equality as a principal objective, thanks to the establishment of a 15 per cent target;
- More than 150 experts deployed to document sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and crisis settings, including to every United Nations commission of inquiry;
- The establishment of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, now supporting 357 women's organizations; the Elsie Fund to help deploy women to peace operations; and the WPS Focal Points Network (the largest network of WPS actors in government) now convening 89 Member States and regional organizations;
- An average of 70 per cent of Security Council resolutions mention women, peace and security-related issues, up from 15 per cent;
- Women's mediator networks established in most regions, including the African Women Leaders Network;
- More than 2,600 local women's organizations and networks supported in 30 crisis settings;
- 1,313,823 women and girls in humanitarian services benefited from support on livelihoods and protection since 2018;
- 365 million people in 42 countries benefitted from gender-responsive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and strategies;

UN coordination

- The first-ever accountability framework for the United Nations system on gender equality and women's empowerment (UN-SWAP) at corporate level and a doubling in UNCTs completing a comprehensive UNCT-SWAP report;
- 66 per cent of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks with gender-specific outcome results, up from 47 per cent;
- A doubling in the number of UN entities tracking resources for gender equality;

Partnerships and Communications

- 180 countries, and over 270 million people, reached through thematic civil society partnerships;
- More than 3 million individual HeForShe commitments by men and boys;
- 12.7 million social media followers, up from 188,000;

III. Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

12. At the outset of the pandemic, UN-Women responded swiftly, leveraging its triple mandate to bring attention to gender dimensions from the global to country levels. A COVID-19 programmatic response framework focused on five areas grounded in UN-Women's proven expertise: ending violence against women, economic resilience, leadership and participation, gender statistics and humanitarian action.

13. Through its membership in the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, UN-Women contributed to a strong focus on gender equality in the [UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#), which served as the basis for operationalizing the [United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund](#). Successful advocacy resulted in a 30 per cent funding target for gender equality targeted programmes.

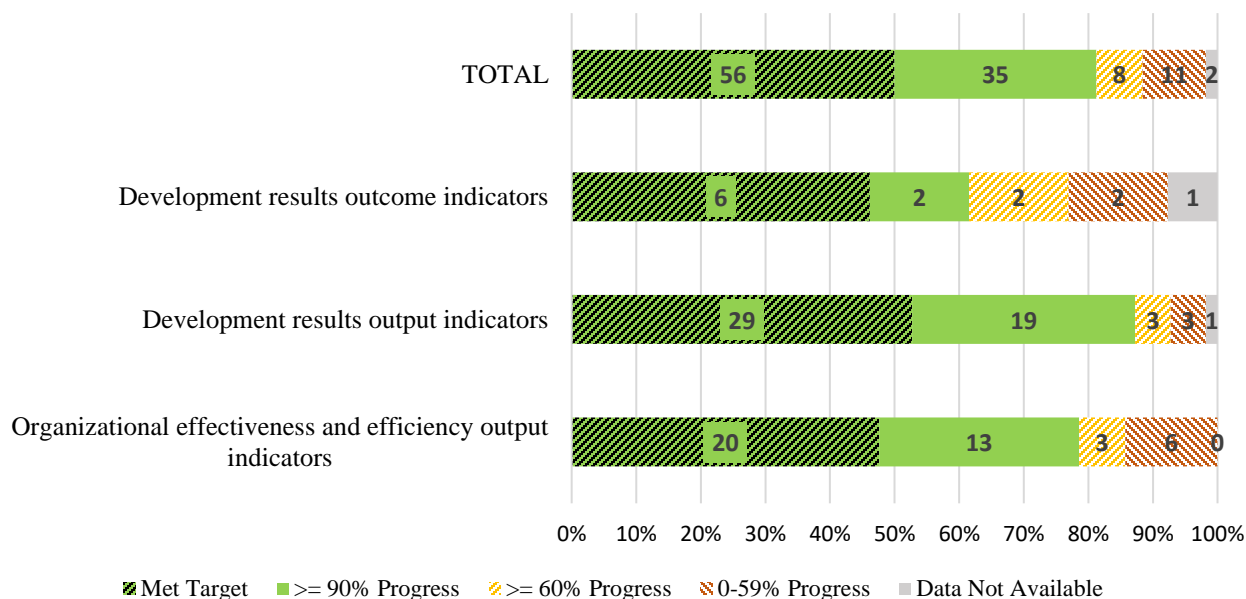
14. UN-Women was instrumental in providing accurate sex-disaggregated data and guidance on the gendered impacts of COVID-19, producing 15 global policy briefs on violence against women, economic fall-out and recovery and the care economy, women's leadership and peace processes. It backed rapid gender assessments in 51 countries, and worked closely with the International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank to document health, employment and poverty impacts. Partnership with UNDP produced the [Global Covid-19 Gender Response Tracker](#), featuring over 3,000 policy measures across 219 countries and territories. The tracker has been used extensively to reveal gender-blind policy responses and was the basis for a joint call for governments and international organizations to enact gender-responsive social protection.

15. UN-Women led the drafting of the UN policy brief, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*, launched by the Secretary-General and supported the Secretary-General's call to end gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19 (responded to by 146 United Nations' Member States and Observers) mobilizing the entire United Nations system to address the "shadow pandemic" of gender-based violence and implement a gender-sensitive COVID-19 response. UN-Women supported women's rights organizations to address increased levels of violence against women by strengthening essential services and data collection, and integrating targeted actions into pandemic response and recovery plans. The UN Trust Fund developed a [5-point Action Plan](#) to assist over 150 current grantees in 71 countries and territories in adapting interventions.

16. Importantly, UN-Women began a systematic process to influence IFIs as early as April 2020, holding five high-level ministerial roundtables with the World Bank, IFC, IDB, and the Asian Development Bank, among others, to ensure a gender lens in stimulus packages. The Entity serves on the WHO-led United Nations Crisis Management Team and contributed to a gender-responsive WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (April 2020 update).

IV. Introduction to development results, including programme expenditures and types of contributions

17. In 2020, UN-Women supported 95 countries and territories, including high-income countries, to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Overall progress towards targets is positive. UN-Women achieved good performance for 89 per cent of assessable milestones at the development results output level (Figure 1). COVID-19 necessitated the following adjustments to UN-Women's Strategic Plan: downward adjustment of 2021 targets for 19 indicators, upward adjustment of one target, and five new indicators, based on UN-Women's co-custodian role for indicators of the [UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#).

Figure 1: Progress against 2020 milestones

These figures exclude indicators that are only monitored at component or disaggregated levels and SDG indicators, which are not assigned annual milestones. For other outcome indicators, no annual milestones were set, but the assessment here assumes a linear trajectory of 25 per cent progress per year against the 2021 target.

18. This section highlights progress against Strategic Plan outcome areas and analyses the effectiveness of UN-Women's strategies.

Beijing+25

UN-Women supported events marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, including the high-level panel discussion of the Human Rights Council, the multistakeholder hearing of the President of the General Assembly and the high-level meeting of the General Assembly.

UN-Women's flagship Generation Equality campaign launched in 2019, in anticipation of the Beijing+25 events, galvanized partners, influencers and the global public to engage on women's rights and empowerment, reaching a staggering 1.3 billion through social media.

The Secretary-General's report on the 25-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action described important gains, including major progress in education and health for women and girls. Progress towards gender equality overall, however, has stalled, even reversing in some areas, including setbacks to sexual and reproductive health and rights in some regions. Across the globe, UN-Women is joining women's movements to challenge slow, piecemeal progress, and prioritize systemic change in the face of multiple crises.

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

Number of countries and territories covered:
2020: 38

Total expenditure:
2020: 26.76 million

Contributes to achieving all the SDGs



Figure 2: Outcome 1
Progress against 2020 milestones

Output		Indicator	
1	112%	1.1.1	N/A
		1.1.2	99%
		1.1.3	131%
		1.1.4	106%
2	61%	1.2.1	100%
		1.2.2	22%
3	93%	1.3.1	93%

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

19. UN-Women continued efforts to strengthen the integration of gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes and bodies, although COVID-19 impacts required significant adjustments, including to ensure business continuity. At the output level, the average milestone attainment rate was 92 per cent.

20. In 2020, 47 per cent of General Assembly resolutions integrated a gender perspective, an increase over previous years. Analysis of voluntary national reviews presented to the High-level Political Forum revealed that only 52 per cent integrated a gender perspective across all SDGs, a drop from 2019 given a more rigorous assessment methodology.

21. Despite the pandemic, the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, brought significant results. As the substantive secretariat of the Commission, UN-Women made extensive preparations and mobilized stakeholders, leading to a strong Political Declaration. It drew on the Secretary-General's global synthesis report on the review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years since its adoption, which was based on 173 national reports and collaboration with United Nations regional commissions in their review processes. Seventy-six per cent of Member States expressed satisfaction with the support provided by UN-Women.

22. In 2020, 70 UN-Women initiatives helped non-governmental organizations contribute to global policy discussions in countries. While this figure increased from previous years, the number of countries reporting results against this indicator remained constant.
23. UN-Women strengthened the reflection of gender perspectives in the work of the Human Rights Council, including the recommendations of Member States in the Universal Periodic Review, by providing technical support to Member States as well as contributing to the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and other special procedures mandate holders.
24. UN-Women continued to support implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2020, the Entity supported 83.3 per cent of United Nations country team reports to the CEDAW Committee. UN-Women supported the adoption of legal reforms in alignment with the Convention, including the law combatting domestic violence in **Moldova** and the decree on implementation of the labour code in **Viet Nam** which addresses sexual harassment in the workplace for the first time.
25. UN-Women continued advocating for incorporating gender perspectives in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat. A virtual expert consultation resulted in an issues brief to Convention Parties with recommendations on gender-specific indicators. All were included in the draft monitoring framework that Parties will discuss at the 2021 meeting of the Convention's scientific body.
26. UN-Women supported the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to organize regional workshops on integrating gender perspectives in national climate actions. Workshop recommendations will contribute to developing or revising nationally determined contributions.
27. The COVID-19-related postponement or cancellation of intergovernmental and expert body meetings affected UN-Women's ability to engage with Member States on strengthening the global normative framework. With new working methods likely to continue, UN-Women will adjust its outreach for optimal impact.

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



Figure 3: Outcome 2
Progress against 2020 milestones

Output		Indicator	
4	133%	2.4.1	148%
		2.4.2	150%
		2.4.3	109%
		2.4.4	125%
5	113%	2.5.1	116%
		2.5.2	96%
		2.5.3	126%
		2.5.4	106%
		2.5.4	145%
6	146%	2.6.1	150%
		2.6.2	138%
		2.6.3	146%
		2.6.4	150%
7	150%	2.7.1	150%
		2.7.2	150%
		2.7.3	150%

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

28. COVID-19 highlighted the imperative of anchoring gender equality in laws, policies and budgets, while strengthening institutional capacities and women's access to decision-making so that measures effectively meet women's priorities. UN-Women, with United Nations and civil society partners, supported governance systems in 80 countries, realizing an average output attainment rate of 136 per cent as the need for gender-responsive governance increased during the pandemic.

29. UN-Women contributed to the adoption of eight legal frameworks promoting gender balance in elections and decision-making bodies, and 15 gender-responsive national development strategies. In **Chile**, multistakeholder dialogues and a voter education campaign, jointly supported by UN-Women and UNDP, played a direct role in the adoption of a parity constituent assembly. The Entity facilitated the inclusion of gender equality in **Afghanistan's** National Peace and Development Plan II and **Zimbabwe's** National Development Strategy 1 through analysis, advocacy and consultations with women's groups.

30. Support to parliamentary committees and women's caucuses contributed to the adoption of 29 gender-responsive initiatives, including gender quotas in **Burkina Faso** and **Kazakhstan**, and gender-responsive legislation on COVID-19 in **Colombia**.

31. More than 6,800 women political aspirants increased leadership and campaigning skills. They included over 700 indigenous and Afro-descendant candidates in **Brazil** trained on information and communications technology (ICT) and social media campaigning.

32. UN-Women supported 28 initiatives to respond to violence against women in politics. Mexico amended eight national laws. Globally, UN-Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNDP, the Development Coordination Office and others defined key messages on violence against women in politics that were distributed to all United Nations resident coordinators.

33. With UN-Women and United Nations partners' (including UNDP and DPPA) technical support, electoral stakeholders developed 21 gender equality reforms. Effective implementation of a quota law doubled the number of women elected to **Mali's** Parliament.

34. UN-Women assisted in developing and implementing 14 gender equality national action plans. The Entity's technical assistance in **Colombia** supported the development of a new action plan for the National Gender Public Policy. At the global level, UN-Women supported gender mainstreaming in the inter-agency report and the ECOSOC inter-governmental outcome on Financing for Development, to strengthen the evidence base for gender-responsive policy measures to COVID-19.

35. UN-Women supported 15 ministries of finance to develop capacities on gender-responsive budgeting. In **Albania**, UN-Women supported the prioritization of gender equality objectives by 38 line ministries and state institutions, resulting in an increase in gender-responsive allocations over one year from 7 to 9 per cent of the total budget. In its annual *Gender Budget Report*, **Morocco's** Ministry of Finance included a gender analysis of COVID-19. UN-Women helped 15 national women's machineries and 171 women's organizations to strengthen skills to monitor and advocate for gender-responsive plans and budgets.

36. UN-Women strengthened gender expertise in 13 national HIV coordination institutions. Across 35 countries, over 28,000 women living with HIV enhanced leadership skills and participated in decision-making. In **Zimbabwe**, UN-Women created a platform through which women living with HIV successfully influenced the new HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan and secured \$20 million for funding young women's priorities for HIV programming in the government's grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

37. UN-Women helped prioritize gender equality in women's health, particularly through the H6 partnership, contributing to the Secretary-General's *Global Strategy on Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health*.

38. Over 11,500 justice personnel gained capacities on women's rights standards. In **Guatemala**, ancestral justice representatives collaborated with the formal justice system to improve access for indigenous women. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia** and **Tanzania**, 975 traditional leaders and informal justice actors were trained on gender-responsive justice. In 20 countries, 51,485 women accessed legal aid, including in **Liberia** and **Sierra Leone** where UN-Women partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

39. Eleven affirmative action policies in the justice sector were developed, and four adopted. In **Nepal**, a *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy for the Judiciary* focused on excluded groups was developed. UN-Women supported 262 legal reform efforts globally; 16 per cent were adopted. In **Rwanda**, the 2016 Family Law was amended, eliminating barriers to widows remarrying and facilitating child custody for women. In **Lebanon**, UN-Women contributed to passage of the Law to Criminalize Sexual Harassment.

40. With increased capacities, national governments made more efficient decisions on gender statistics priorities. UN-Women helped 8 countries integrate gender statistics in statistics strategies, 10 countries improve statistical coordination mechanisms, and 4,014 data producers and users build technical capacities. It supported 12 reports on national SDG progress. UN-Women also worked with governments and regional commissions to collect SDG data, including on SDG indicator 5.5.1b for which UN-Women coordinated the first-ever global databased enabling 133 countries and areas to provide globally comparable data on women's representation in local government.

Leaving no one behind

UN-Women has played a leading role in inter-agency fora in ensuring a gender equality and intersectional perspective. Sixty-seven offices supported initiatives to empower women and girls with disabilities by providing normative guidance, integrated policy advice, operational support and capacity development. In 35 countries, support to women living with HIV included accessing HIV services.

- In **Guatemala**, UN-Women helped establish the Indigenous Women's Platform, comprising 50 indigenous women from seven generations, as an advisory body to the Vice-President of the Republic
- In **Tajikistan**, through UN-Women's advocacy, a woman living with HIV chaired a working group that developed a new national HIV programme
- In **Bangladesh**, 32,748 Rohingya women and girls, including pregnant women and women affected by HIV, benefitted from sexual and reproductive health and rights and nutrition knowledge and services, and livelihood skills training and support across 10 refugee camps
- In **Palestine**, A total of 17,557 women survivors, victims and women vulnerable to violence received multisectoral gender-based violence services through interventions.

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

Number of countries and territories covered:
2020: 63

Total expenditure:
2020: 46.95 million

Contributes to achieving the following SDGs:



Figure 4: Outcome 3
Progress against 2020 milestones

Output		Indicator	
8	117%	3.8.1	62%
		3.8.2	91%
		3.8.3	102%
		3.8.4	150%
		3.8.5	150%
		3.8.6	150%
9	124%	3.9.1	150%
		3.9.2	102%
		3.9.3	132%
		3.9.4	150%
		3.9.5	84%
10	101%	3.10.1	144%
		3.10.2	133%
		3.10.3	27%

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

41. A confluence of factors propelled progress on women's economic empowerment in 2020, resulting in an average output attainment rate of 116 per cent. Factors included increased capacities for data collection and demand for targeted COVID-19 support.

42. UN-Women supported 22 national gender-responsive impact assessments that informed COVID-19 response plans, and strengthened government capacities to implement women's economic empowerment policies in 12 countries. Data on SDG gender-related indicators increased, including indicator 5.4.1, for which UN-Women is the co-custodian.

43. Ramped-up support led to the adoption of legal, regulatory and policy frameworks, including 19 to expand women's access to gender-responsive social protection systems, 25 on the care economy and 18 on decent work. Fourteen laws and regulations on gender-responsive macroeconomic frameworks were adopted. A global policy tool on engendering fiscal stimulus packages, developed by UN-Women jointly with ILO, was instrumental in Myanmar developing a gender-responsive Economic Recovery and Reform Plan, and informed gender-responsive fiscal stimulus packages

in 19 other countries. UN-Women expects to scale up these efforts in 2021. UN-Women supported the development or strengthening of national care policies and systems in **Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Paraguay** and **Uruguay**.

44. UN-Women supported 114,243 women in 33 countries to strengthen technical, digital and financial skills and capacities to participate in the economy, including as entrepreneurs (69,332 from rural areas, 1,426 migrant women and 393 women with disabilities). The Entity assisted 18,440 women in 26 countries to access gender-responsive financial products and services (8,722 in rural areas).

45. To open markets for women, other support helped 171 government entities, companies and international organizations in 16 countries develop gender-responsive procurement. In **South Africa**, close work with the Presidency bolstered affirmative procurement from women's businesses.

46. In 2020, 1,630 new signatories of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) brought the total to 4,445, representing over 10 million employees in 141 countries. COVID-specific guidance was provided to WEPs' signatories, including to support women entrepreneurs. In **Brazil**, UN-Women supported the private sector to improve supplier diversity policies. In **Palestine**, WEPs signatories adopted a gender-responsive flexible working arrangement policy.

47. UN-Women's advocacy and technical support to governments and other stakeholders led to the development, reform and/or implementation of 30 gender-responsive policies on women's land rights and tenure security, the fruit of ongoing efforts across the climate-resilient agriculture portfolio. UN-Women supported 100,906 rural women in 26 countries (277 migrant women and 971 women aged 61 or above) to access, use and/or control productive resources, and climate-resilient and time-saving technologies and tools. Across **Africa** and in **China** and **Viet Nam**, UN-Women boosted the resilience of rural women to climate change and COVID-19 through improved incomes and livelihoods, greater participation and leadership in agricultural cooperatives and gender mainstreaming in agriculture sector reform.

48. The Buy from Women Digital Initiative, piloted in **Rwanda, Haiti** and **Mali**, expanded to **Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Senegal** and **South Africa** in 2020. Meeting the goals for the initiative, however, requires significantly augmenting the technical capacity of UN-Women and prospective beneficiaries, and securing targeted resources.

49. A major lesson in 2020 from facing COVID-19 and climate challenges, while trying to ensure women's security, including economic security, is that UN-Women needs greater global and local capacities to scale up support for women's economic empowerment with an eye towards resilience and recovery.

Partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFI) and innovative financing

In 2020, UN-Women implemented a new approach to IFI partnerships and influencing the Financing for Development Process. UN-Women contributed significantly to the policy options for COVID-19 recovery presented to Ministers of Finance and Heads of State at the 2020 General Assembly. Recommendations included a focus on the inclusion of women in decision-making and a gender-responsive approach to economic and social policies, pertaining to social protection and the care economy.

Engagement with development banks helped ensure that crisis response financing had a gender lens. UN-Women and Agence Française de Développement co-chair the Gender Secretariat of the Finance in Common platform, a network of 450 public development banks working towards aligning methodologies and adopting best practices for gender-responsive Investments.

UN-Women joined the International Capital Markets Association standard-setting body for social bonds and works with UNDP's SDG Bond Principles and Framework to establish standards and indicators for gender-lens investing. Technical expertise supports governments in structuring the first sovereign gender bonds to achieve national gender equality targets.

UN-Women also began an innovative finance pilot to launch a sovereign gender bond. Working in middle-income countries with fiscal space and access to markets, UN-Women began laying the foundation for gender-driven external finance in a few selected countries supported by strong client country interest in such innovative models.

Innovation

UN-Women intensified efforts to identify, test and scale innovations tackling women's and girls' challenges, including those posed by COVID-19. In Jordan, blockchain and iris scanning allowed Syrian refugees to use cash transfers safely. In Mexico, designers and activists developed digital solutions for women's safety in public spaces during mobility restrictions. A pilot in Liberia and Malawi is enhancing small landholders' disaster resilience through digital and mobile technologies. In Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, studies identified behavioural drivers for low domestic violence reporting and women's limited participation in ICT, helping define interventions to address both.

D. Outcome 4: All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence

Number of countries and territories covered:
2020: 67

Total expenditure:
2020: 101.80 million

Contributes to achieving the following SDGs:



Figure 5: Outcome 4
Progress against 2020 milestones

Output		Indicator	
11	129%	4.11.1	138%
		4.11.2	113%
		4.11.3	116%
		4.11.4	113%
		4.11.5	150%
		4.11.6	83%
		4.11.6	102%
		4.11.6	127%
		4.11.6	133%
		4.11.6	79%
12	119%	4.11.7	148%
		4.12.1	122%
		4.12.2	150%
		4.12.3	52%
		4.12.4	150%

■ ≥90% progress ■ ≥60% progress ■ 0-59% progress

50. UN-Women drew global attention to the increasing “shadow pandemic” of violence against women and girls during COVID-19. The pandemic impacted the institutional stability of many partner organizations at a time when prevention and response measures were most needed. Both UN-Women and UN Trust Fund grantees quickly adapted to maintain essential responses, while ensuring the safety of beneficiaries and staff. UN-Women had an average output achievement rate of 125 per cent and made good progress at the outcome level.

51. UN-Women used global platforms, such as the Secretary-General’s report on eliminating violence against women and girls, to highlight the COVID-19 fallout; a series of policy briefs provided technical guidance to accelerate responses.

52. UN-Women continued to successfully leverage its United Nations system coordination role and promote integrated interagency approaches, notably through leading an interagency working group of eight United Nations entities that resulted in a joint statement on violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19 and coordinated inter-agency mobilization of multiple stakeholders. Sixteen countries developed national action plans/strategies with a component addressing social norms, attitudes and behaviours. Through the European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative, UN-Women strengthened prevention worldwide by mobilizing different stakeholders, including the private sector in **Uganda** and faith-based leaders in **Malawi**.

They led advocacy to end violence against women and girls during the pandemic and beyond. In **India**, the #HeForShe TikTok campaign urging men and boys to create more equal households received over 210,000 impressions and 1 billion views. UN-Women launched the RESPECT Implementation Package, together with WHO, providing tools for developing, monitoring and evaluating prevention programmes.

53. Technical support helped 10 countries develop or improve guidelines, protocols and standard operating procedures to provide quality services to survivors. A total of 98,688 women and girls used specialist support services such as trauma counselling, legal aid and safe accommodation provided by UN Trust Fund grantees and implementing partners. In **Cambodia**, the UN Trust Fund funded ADD International and the Cambodia Women's Crisis Center to strengthen services for women living with disabilities. UN Trust Fund grantees reached at least 21,040 women with disabilities.

54. Much of UN-Women's response during the pandemic built on significant innovation, use of technology and stronger partnerships. In **Argentina** and **Chile**, UN-Women, WhatsApp and civil society supported upgrades of existing national helplines to increase accessibility. Through the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services, UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO, UNODC and UNDP launched a global costing methodology to estimate requirements for a minimum package of services.

55. In partnership with the local government of Rabat, **Morocco**, UN-Women co-organized the Fifth Global Leaders' Forum on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces and the Third Global Meeting of Mayors for Gender Equality. Both events culminated in a Global Commitment to Action signed by 30 local governments, including from **Canada, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Germany, Uganda** and **Ukraine**. COVID-19 guidance on safe cities resulted in adapted programming on prevention and the response to sexual violence in public spaces in over 15 countries. Due to global lockdowns, social norms and broader prevention activities were postponed or reprogrammed, focusing on response.

56. Lessons learned included the need to invest in under-resourced areas, such as targeted programming on violence against women and girls with disabilities, who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Creating an enabling environment and scaling up evidence-based essential services and long-term prevention programming are also critical. Moving forward, there is a need to prepare for likely socioeconomic impacts from COVID-19, including of lost income and limited government spending on support services and prevention programmes. Expanding partnerships, including with women's rights and civil society organizations, research networks and the private sector, will be key to success.

Eradicating sexual harassment

UN-Women provided critical support to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination's Taskforce on Sexual Harassment. It co-led an outreach and knowledge-sharing workstream, and advanced common understanding of a victim-centred approach. Through webinars, including on informal care work, UN-Women highlighted the prevention of sexual harassment in multiple settings and produced discussion papers that furthered thought leadership.

UN-Women promulgated an updated Policy on Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority now strengthening zero-tolerance and victim-centred approaches, in line with the UN Model Policy. Efforts around preventing sexual exploitation and abuse included mapping resources, coordinating the focal point network and conceptualizing scenario-based training.

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:
2020: 77

Total expenditure:
2020: 105.52

Contributes to achieving the following SDGs:



Figure 6: Outcome 5
Progress against 2020 milestones

Output		Indicator	
13	124%	5.13.1	150%
		5.13.2	105%
		5.13.3	150%
		5.13.4	89%
14	149%	5.14.1	146%
		5.14.2	150%
		5.14.3	150%
15	144%	5.15.1	143%
		5.15.2	141%
		5.15.3	150%

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

57. Amid a global pandemic, increasingly complex and protracted conflicts, humanitarian crises and more frequent disasters, UN-Women partnered with 40 United Nations entities across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to support women and girls to contribute to, and equally benefit from, measures building peace and resilience, and respond to humanitarian crises and disasters. Using partnership-driven approaches to address increased needs, UN-Women reached an average output achievement rate of 137 per cent against 2020 milestones.

58. Support to National Action Plans on women, peace and security resulted in more plans with high-impact criteria (18 in 2020); 86 per cent now include monitoring frameworks with indicators, a trend that has been increasing every year.

59. Among Security Council resolutions, 64 per cent referenced gender equality issues. The Council's Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security, with UN-Women as the secretariat, held seven meetings, including one on COVID-19. Shortly after, the first Security Council resolution on the pandemic called for actions to ensure the full participation of women in the response.

60. UN-Women's partnership with the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund allocating 13.2 per cent of funding to projects with gender equality as a principal objective, and maintaining the previously reached level of 40 per cent of all investments supporting gender-responsive peacebuilding.

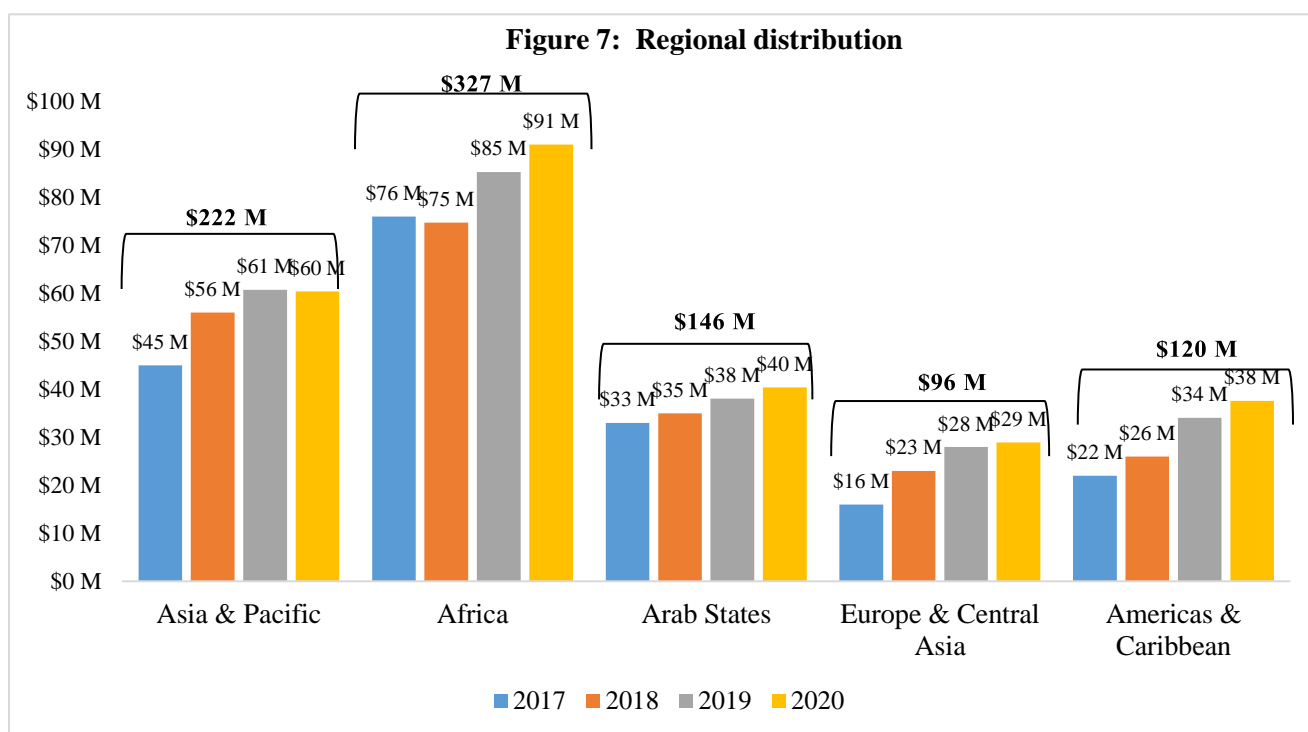
61. The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund increased its partners to over 300 across 23 countries, a nearly threefold rise since 2019. The Fund's new COVID-19 emergency response window supported women's organizations with 42 projects in 18 crisis settings.
62. A notable increase in UN-Women's support to civil society to influence formal and informal peace processes, despite the pandemic, meant 1,253 organizations benefited from financial and technical support. Greater focus was also given to the protection of women human rights defenders and peacebuilders.
63. UN-Women assisted 178 justice and security institutions in 25 countries to mainstream gender perspectives and protect the rights of women and girls. A partnership with Justice Rapid Response deployed 23 investigators on sexual and gender-based violence in 11 conflict and crisis situations, where they collected evidence to hold perpetrators accountable. UN-Women expanded knowledge around counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, and contributed to greater integration of women, peace and security priorities in 17 policies and programmes.
64. The gender-responsiveness of COVID-19 measures improved through providing gender equality expertise to humanitarian coordination mechanisms in 18 countries. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee COVID-19 Gender-Alert and localized guidance in 13 countries, developed by UN-Women, guided humanitarian action. Contributions to the COVID-19 Needs Assessment Methodology of the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations system helped assess gendered socioeconomic impacts in nine countries.
65. UN-Women monitored adherence to gender equality commitments in 30 crisis contexts. The *IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action Evaluation* recognized the UN-Women-led Gender Accountability Framework as a success factor, and called for better use of UN-Women's mandate within the Committee.
66. In countries with UN-Women presence, 86 per cent of humanitarian cluster systems had gender equality expertise through the Entity. Among publicly available 2021 humanitarian needs overviews, 100 per cent included sex- and age-disaggregated data and some gender analysis, often drawing from UN-Women-led analyses.
67. UN-Women supported 571,007 crisis-affected women and girls and 90,520 men and boys with direct humanitarian services, including in the Rohingya response in **Bangladesh** and **Myanmar**, the Syrian refugee crisis in **Jordan**, **Iraq**, **Egypt**, **Lebanon** and **Turkey**, the Venezuela response in **Brazil**, **Colombia**, **Ecuador** and **the Caribbean**, the protracted crisis in the **State of Palestine**, and complex emergencies such as in **Yemen** and the Lake Chad Basin crisis in **Cameroon**, **Niger** and **Nigeria**. In 38 countries, UN-Women built the self-reliance of crisis-affected women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities, by addressing food insecurity and gender-based violence, and supporting women's livelihoods and leadership. With private-sector partners, the Second-Chance Education programme improved livelihood opportunities for 12,000 women in **Cameroon** and **Jordan**. UN-Women enabled 1,270 local women's organizations to guide and implement humanitarian activities, improving gender-equitable outcomes and accountability to affected populations.
68. UN-Women worked with 50 United Nations entities to mainstream gender equality into the progress review of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction, which helped identify gender equality gaps in disaster resilience for more effective, equitable and inclusive disaster prevention, preparedness and recovery worldwide. UN-Women contributed to gender-responsive disaster risk reduction frameworks in 41 countries, covering an additional 107 million people.

69. Through merging its units on peace and security and humanitarian action, UN-Women enhanced its ability to support conflict-, crisis- and disaster-affected women and girls more comprehensively and will continue to do so in the coming year.

F. Programme expenditures and types of contributions

70. Total programme expenditures in 2020 reached \$341.4 million. Expenditures in field offices increased by 108 per cent over the past five years. Twenty-six per cent of total programme expenditures were through joint programmes.

71. Geographically, the highest programme expenditure 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 (\$105.5 million), followed by ending violence against women (\$101.8 million).



72. By function, capacity development and technical assistance continued to be provided in most countries (80 countries), followed by advocacy and social mobilization in 79 countries. United Nations system coordination took place in 78 countries.

V. Assessment of organizational effectiveness and efficiency

73. In 2020, UN-Women continued strengthening organizational efficiency and effectiveness in support of development results while shifting to new ways of working. It achieved good performance in 79 per cent of output indicators.

74. A business transformation continued with the consolidation of strategic planning, risk management and resource management under one division, which underpins effective decision-making, transparency and accountability. Harnessing synergies from the merger of the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Support

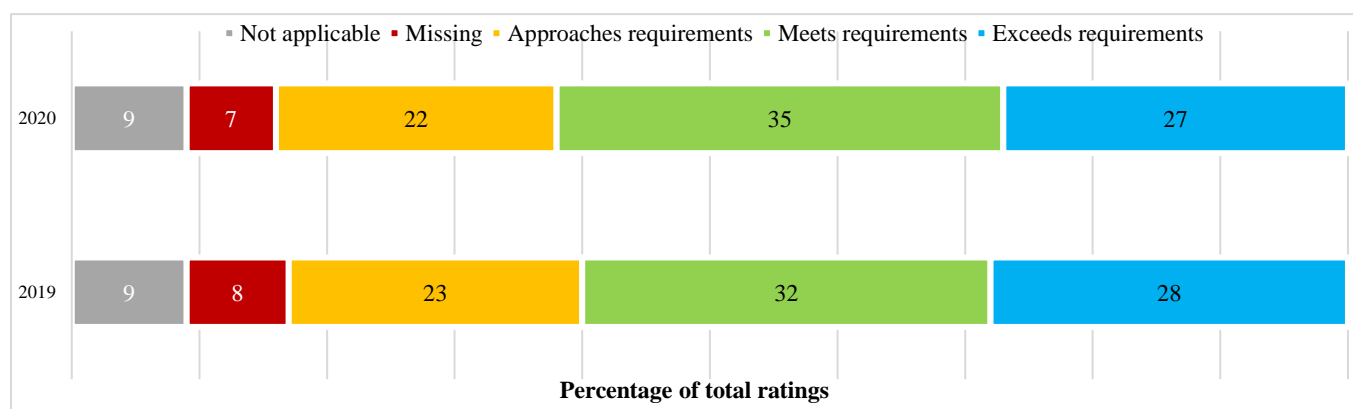
functions in one Division also continued in 2020. A new Presence Governance Framework defines typologies and drives standardization to optimize field presence.

G. Output 1: Enhanced coordination, coherence and accountability of the United Nations system for commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment

75. Through participation in the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and coordination mechanisms, UN-Women leveraged its mandate to strengthen gender mainstreaming across the United Nations, with an average attainment rate of 75 per cent for this output.

76. In 2020, a record 70 United Nations entities (95 per cent) reported against the UN-SWAP 2.0. Sixty-two per cent of all ratings, a two percentage-point increase, met or exceeded requirements. The percentage of entities tracking and reporting on allocations and expenditures using gender equality markers decreased slightly due to inconsistencies in applying UN-SWAP requirements (Figure 8).

Figure 8. UN-SWAP 2.0 ratings for the United Nations system



77. Altogether, 38 United Nations country teams (29 per cent) conducted the UNCT-SWAP in 2020, slightly below the 2020 milestone. UNCT-SWAP standards informed analysis for COVID-19 responses and guidance on United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

78. The proportion of Cooperation Frameworks featuring gender-specific results at the outcome level decreased to 65.9 per cent (72.3 per cent in 2019). In 2021, UN-Women will explore the causes of this recent decline.

79. Gender equality remained the most common focus of United Nations joint programmes. With UN-Women's technical support, some key system-wide financing instruments strengthened focus on gender equality; 65 per cent of funding in the second call of the COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund went to proposals with gender equality as the principal objective.

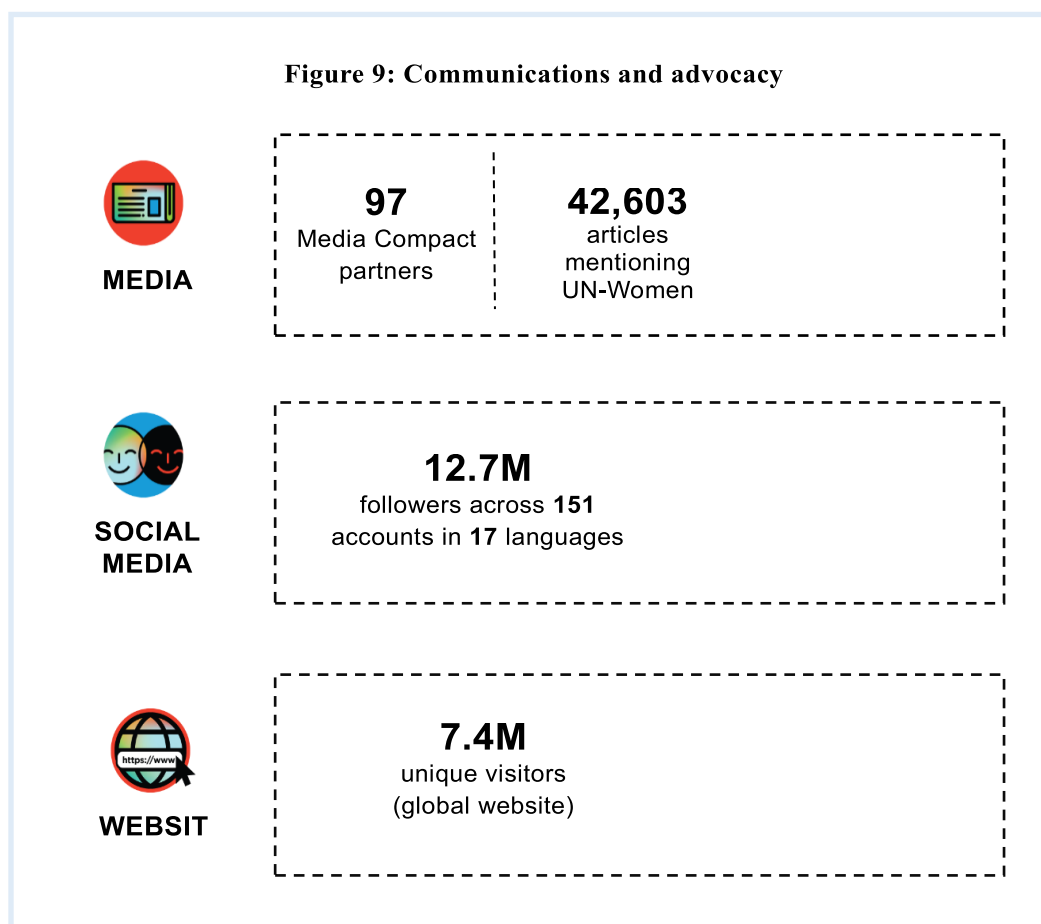
80. To accelerate the Secretary-General's system-wide *Strategy on Gender Parity*, UN-Women produced the field-specific *Enabling Environment Guidelines*.

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

81. In 2020, UN-Women continued to leverage partnerships and strengthen communications and advocacy to achieve scale and impact, with an average output attainment rate of 131 per cent.

82. Multistakeholder partnerships with broadened constituencies of civil society, including networks of men and boys and youth groups, together with governments, United Nations entities and the private sector shaped the Generation Equality Forum and its outcomes. Support went to over 1,000 initiatives by civil society mechanisms, including those led by civil society advisory groups. In 50 countries, assistance helped 590 women's organizations mitigate COVID-19 impacts. UN-Women engaged men and boys and faith-based organizations in 45 countries; 64 country offices mobilized youth to accelerate gender equality. HeForShe, having reached 3.4 million supporters since 2015, added 49,151. Many former HeForShe Champions now lead Generation Equality Action Coalitions.

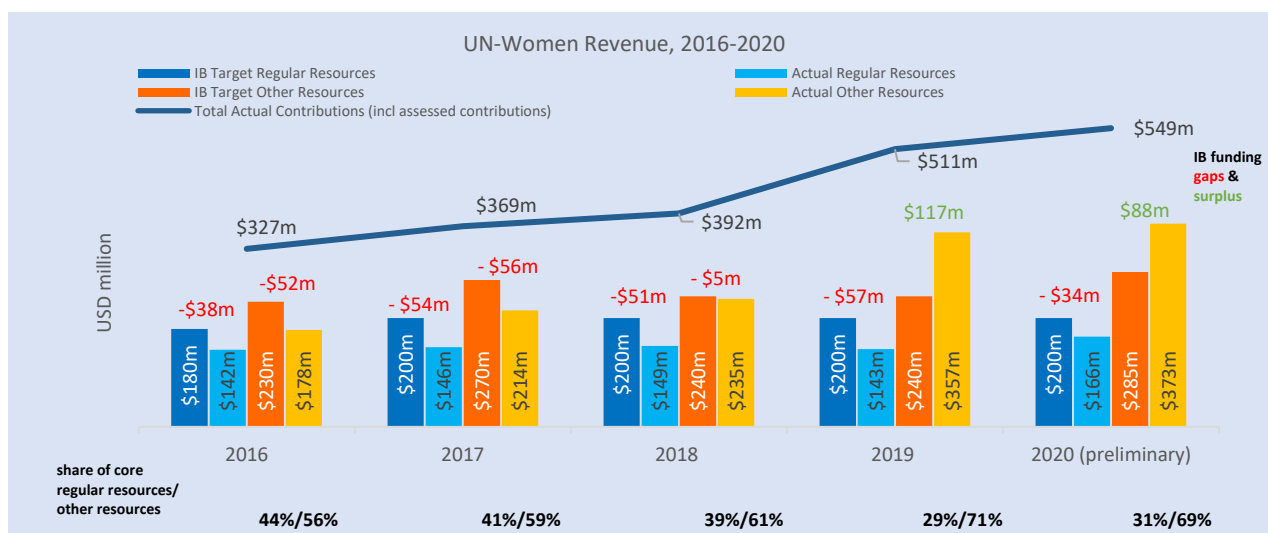
83. Amid the pandemic, UN-Women harnessed all platforms and partners, exceeding all milestones (Figure 10). Galvanizing its growing Media Compact and partnerships with Facebook, Google, Condé Nast, Deloitte and others, and through cutting-edge digital content and social media, UN-Women drove public and media awareness of impacts on women, demonstrated UN-Women's added value and mobilized support for the Generation Equality campaign and Forum.



84. Strengthened engagement with private sector partners included forming 22 new global partnerships and launching four national chapters of the Unstereotype Alliance. National Committees raised USD 3.9 million.

85. For the second consecutive year, UN-Women’s total revenue exceeded USD 500 million. Regular resources grew by 16 per cent to USD 166 million and other resources by 4 per cent to USD 373 million, both an all-time high. The ratio of regular to other resources increased slightly, to 31 per cent, surpassing the Funding Compact threshold.

Figure 10: Resource Mobilization



Growth 2019 vs. 2020

+8% voluntary contributions

+16% regular resources

+4% other resources



171 total funding partners

90 Member States contributed to UN-Women

83 Member States contributed to regular resources

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

86. Following a risk-informed COVID-19 related business impact analysis and reprogramming exercise, UN-Women nimbly responded to the new context, strengthening programming through enhanced knowledge, innovation and results-based management. The average attainment rate for this output is 130 per cent.

87. Timely and targeted evidence-based knowledge products, including COVID-19 policy briefs and other publications and the Asia-Pacific In Focus knowledge portal on “Gender equality matters in COVID-19 response”, supported governments and other partners. Eleven country offices explored innovative digital initiatives to better address women’s and girls’ challenges during the pandemic.

88. Together with governments, United Nations country teams and other partners, 12 UN-Women country offices finalized country gender equality profiles. These offer comprehensive, evidence-based analyses to integrate gender equality in Country Common Assessments and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

89. Forty per cent of field offices supported South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, including around the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325. In **South Africa**, UN-Women collaborated with the Embassy of Ireland and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders to study COVID-19 impacts on women peacebuilders in **Colombia, Ireland, South Africa** and **Uganda**.

90. UN-Women’s Training Centre provided 127,651 participants (80,567 women and 47,084 men) with new knowledge and skills on gender equality and women’s empowerment, a 90 per cent increase.

91. Ninety per cent of UN-Women-managed evaluations were rated “good” or “very good”, a significant improvement since 2019.

J. Output 4: Improved management of financial and human resources in pursuit of results

92. UN-Women continued to leverage technology, streamline business processes, embed risk management practices and strengthen personnel capacity, with an average attainment rate of 95 per cent for this output. Continued commitment to the International Aid Transparency Initiative saw a score of 87.

93. Technology investments paid off as the organization seamlessly transitioned to fully online operations during the pandemic. Work with UN partners began on a new, more efficient and cloud-based enterprise resource planning system.

94. UN-Women continued strengthening a diverse, inclusive and enabling workplace, free of racial and all other prejudices, with an emphasis on accountability while streamlining systems and processes. A new performance management system links individual goals to Strategic Plan results, and achieved 86 per cent compliance with annual performance management and development reviews. Significant savings came from partnering with the United Nations Children’s Fund on a learning management system; addressing urgent recruitment needs through new mechanisms; and boosting efforts to secure volunteers through an agreement with UN Volunteers.

95. UN-Women received its ninth consecutive unqualified United Nations Board of Auditors audit opinion on its 2019 financial statements, a clear demonstration of operational maturity. The Entity revised its risk management framework and built related capacity; 97 per cent of risk units met policy requirements.

96. As of 2020, 70 per cent of UN-Women offices were co-located with one or more United Nations entities. UN-Women remained active in rolling out the Business Operation Strategy 2.0 and participated in the initial common back-office roll-out in nine countries to consolidate efficiency gains and cost reductions. The Entity recorded its highest compliance level with the United Nations Security Management System at 97.3 per cent globally.

97. To better track environmental footprints, in 2020, 37 per cent of country offices reported on greenhouse gas emissions for travel and operations.

VI. Looking forward to the new Strategic Plan 2022–2025

98. In 2020, UN-Women began developing its Strategic Plan 2022–2025. The first since the Beijing+25 review and appraisal, the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325, and the outbreak of COVID-19, it covers four years of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs.

99. Ten years after UN-Women's creation, the global context demands bold ambition and urgent progress to gender equality and women's empowerment. The new Strategic Plan will set the vision for UN-Women's leadership in responding to persistent and emerging challenges and seizing on opportunities to catalyze action to realize gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030.

100. Building on lessons from the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, as well as the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and complementary evaluations and assessments, the new Strategic Plan is informed by inclusive stakeholder engagement. A multistakeholder survey and extensive consultations at global, regional and country levels, including with Member States, civil society, other United Nations entities, the private sector and other actors, have informed the strategic direction, affirming current thematic areas of work and identifying key strategies and priorities for effecting transformative change.

101. UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 will aim to increase the scale and impact of its work, including by more strongly leveraging its triple mandate in an integrated manner; tackling head-on the structural causes of gender inequality, such as regressive social norms; expanding its recognition as a global thought leader, advocate and knowledge hub; and continuously broadening and deepening partnerships and the constituency for joint results, including through a greater focus on its coordination mandate. It will identify how new financing and partnerships approaches can amplify the Entity's impact and strengthen delivery of unique contributions to effect change at scale across key development results.

102. Fulfilling women's rights, through SDG 5, the Beijing Platform for Action, the CEDAW Convention and Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, lies at the heart of the new Strategic Plan and its course forward.

VII. 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 (UNW/2021/XX) and further note UN-Women's strong performance to date in meeting its annual targets;

(b) Encourage UN-Women to take into account lessons from the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, including its midterm review, as well as from its previous strategic plans;

(c) Encourage UN-Women to assess the targets set for the outputs of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, especially those that have consistently been overachieved, and present alternatives in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.
