Second regular session of 2018
10 and 11 September 2018
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Structured dialogue on financing

Structured Dialogue on Financing: Investing in Gender 
Equality and Women’s Empowerment through Financing
UN-Women’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Summary

Pursuant to decisions 2014/6, 2015/5, 2016/4 and 2017/7 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), this report supports a continued structured dialogue that engages the Executive Board on financing UN-Women for the successful implementation of its Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and the achievement of intended outcomes, in support of Member States’ gender-responsive realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The predictability, flexibility and the alignment between funds and their purpose are the key considerations this report discusses to support a comprehensive and in-depth structured dialogue on financing. Agreement on how to achieve an optimal funding structure for UN-Women’s reoccurring funding needs, financial sustainability and resilience are the dialogue’s objectives, particularly in the context of pressures on official development assistance and UN reform.

The Executive Board may wish to: a) take note of the 2018 report on Structured Dialogue on Financing: Investing in Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment through Financing UN-Women’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and encourage UN-Women to continue engaging in a structured dialogue with Member States, with a view to tracking, assessing and following up on the level of funding it receives, as well as the predictability, flexibility and alignment of financial resources provided for the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021; (b) recognize the achievements of UN-Women and that a critical mass of regular resources allows the institutional capacity to plan ahead; strengthen oversight and accountability; engage in efficient and effective management; advance UN system coherence and coordination on gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) in line with UN reforms; and leverage other resources to provide predictable financing for GEWE; (c) urge Member States that are able, to commit increased contributions to UN-Women regular resources in 2018-2021, as early as possible including through
multi-year pledges; and d) note with appreciation the increasing number of contributors to UN-Women.

I. Preface

1. The leadership of Member States in supporting UN-Women and their deepened engagement with and further investment in gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE), with guidance from the Executive Board, is essential for the successful implementation of UN-Women’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021. It will have broad implications for Member States in their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), given the centrality and catalytic effect of GEWE on all dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.

2. Achieving GEWE is a SDG goal in and of itself, with clear intrinsic value that aligns with UN human rights and social justice principles, and is reflected in expanded international gender equality discourse¹. Research shows that GEWE is central to the achievement of other development goals and that “economic and social losses due to the lack of progress in achieving gender equality…are significant” (E.FFDF/2017/L.1), with World Bank analysis published in 2018 finding that barriers to women’s participation in the work force result in “loss in human capital wealth due to gender inequality…estimated at $160.2 trillion.”²

3. The 2030 Agenda committed the international community to “…work[ing] for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for [GEWE] at global, regional and national levels” (A/RES/70/1). The strengthening of Member State, United Nations (UN) and development partner collective action to achieve GEWE, including through increased financial investments, is essential for UN-Women to be “fit for purpose” in fulfilling its unique and central role and triple mandate.

4. UN-Women is the product of UN gender equality architectural reform for improved coherence, coordination and impact, established through a General Assembly resolution (A/64/289), which focused on system-wide coherence.

5. As the only UN organization exclusively dedicated to advancing GEWE worldwide, UN-Women is well positioned to help accelerate the Secretary-General’s UN reform agenda, backed by Member States, which seeks to create a “21st Century UN” that is better able to address current challenges through reform of UN management (Secretariat); the development system; and the UN’s peace and security architecture; with the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity strategy as one milestone on the journey towards a more effective UN.

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6. UN-Women’s first strategic plan period (2011-2013) demonstrated that through UN architectural reform, Member States could pursue and secure greater system-wide coherence in gender equality. The second strategic plan period (2014-2017) focused on establishing the regional and country-level architecture that enabled UN-Women to support Member States’ national ambitions. Over the 2014-2017 period, UN-Women successfully supported Member States to deliver important GEWE benefits that positively affected billions of women and girls around the world, in partnership with UN agencies, civil society and the private sector. As a signal of value for money, the second strategic plan saw UN-Women deliver 80% of the planned results having received 80% of the necessary funding, most of which was not predictable.

7. UN-Women’s current Strategic Plan 2018-2021 is even more firmly anchored in the long-term vision of supporting Member States to accelerate gender-responsive 2030 Agenda implementation through flagship joint programming that leverages the UN system and multi-stakeholder partnerships and transforms lives and countries. It is underpinned by instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, with its explicit focus on reducing rights violations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which frames GEWE as a human rights issue and outlines the necessary GEWE conditions for development. The Strategic Plan sets ambitious targets and uses innovative approaches to help Member States achieve significant results by 2021, less than a decade before the world’s deadline for achieving the SDGs.

8. The Strategic Plan 2018-2021 aligns with the plans of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). These four agencies are committed to combining their collaborative advantage, in order to reduce overlap and duplication, pool expertise, and achieve greater harmonization, innovation and efficiencies in UN funds, programmes and operations, around the world in ways that maximize results for Member States and their citizens.

Why a Structured Dialogue on Financing (SDF)?

9. In line with UN-Women Executive Board decisions 2014/6, 2015/5 and 2016/4 and General Assembly resolutions 67/226 and 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, UN-Women is committed to continuing the dialogue on predictable, flexible alignment of the financial resources available to the Entity for the purpose of implementing a four-year strategic plan.

10. The SDF aims to support a more predictable flow of high-quality resources, which are required for UN-Women to deliver fully against its triple mandate of: (i) normative support; (ii) UN system coordination; and (iii) operational activities, in an integrated manner for transformative GEWE results worldwide. The SDF provides an opportunity for UN-Women, in consultation with its main contributors, to determine how to improve transparency, alignment and predictability of finances, taking into account an optimal funding structure.

11. The ultimate goal of a structured dialogue is that the UN-Women biennium integrated budgets (IB) for the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 periods are fully funded in support of the comprehensive implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The
Strategic Plan 2014-2017 period illustrated how funding shortfalls can limit results. This 2018 SDF report builds on the conclusions and recommendations stemming from the 2017 SDF process.

12. While UN-Women has not yet reached the $500 million funding target originally identified by the Secretary-General as optimal to enable the Entity to pursue its composite mandate (A/65/531), between 2011-2017 it has experienced the commendable overall revenue growth of 57.6%, with total resources increasing from $234 million in 2011 to $369 million in 2017 (see Figure I).

13. In 2017 UN-Women reached its highest total revenue since establishment, with contributions from a total of 211 donors, 112 (53%) of which were Member States. Despite the increase in voluntary funding, revenue was still $109 million below the IB projections for 2017 of $470 million ($200 million in regular resources [RR] also referred to as core, and $270 million in other resources [OR], also referred to as non-core). Moreover, OR funding has overtaken RR funding in volume over time.

Figure I.
UN-Women total contributions revenue 2011-2017
II. Responding to a Changing World

14. The UN is grappling with the question of relevance in a changing world, which has financial implications for the entire UN system in a global political climate that has become less supportive of multilateralism. For instance, the 28 Member States of the European Union voted that the key priority for the UN and the 73rd United Nations General Assembly will be to boost multilateralism and stand behind the UN in a volatile and unpredictable world.3

15. Political movements around the world reflect frustration with “growing inequality, increasing impact from climate change and political systems that are less responsive to the people”4. Shrinking spaces for human rights and gender equality activism in some contexts and contestation over a number of gender equality issues may negatively impact the adequacy of the global GEWE normative framework that underpins UN-Women’s mandate and work.

16. The UN, however, remains a force-multiplier for States, addressing global challenges that – due to their complexity and cost – no single State can confront on its own5. Even though contributions to the UN represent a small share of national budgets and have multiplying effects (85% of programme country governments report that UN activities “closely” or “very closely” align with their development needs6), financing the UN has been an issue of persistent political strife; particularly as it relates to cost-sharing, efficiency, transparency and cost-effectiveness7.

17. The UN system, with its various bodies and programmes, received $49 billion in revenue in 2016 in the form of assessed and voluntary contributions8. The largest share was from governments (78% directly from Governments and a record high of 9% or $2.6 billion from the European Commission9).

18. For many United Nations funds and programmes, as for UN-Women, RR contributions are declining. Between 2002 and 2016, across the UN development system, the RR share of total funding dropped from 37% to 22% and the RR share for development-related activities fell from 41% to 28%. Among the top 10 government contributors, only Sweden and the Netherlands provided more RR than OR funding.

19. UN-Women receives the smallest share of the UN’s assessed contributions, equivalent to 0.05% of total resources distributed across receiving UN entities in 2016. UN-Women also receives a smaller share of voluntary contributions made by Member States to the UN with funding “concentrated in a relatively small number of

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4 See: https://www.globalresearch.ca/power-dynamics-changing-in-world-order/5598514
7 See: https://www.globalpolicy.org/un-finance.html
8 See: http://www.unsystem.org/content/FS-K00-02
[UN] entities, with the top eight (WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, UNRWA, FAO and UNDP) accounting for 84 percent of all contributions in 2016. A June 2017 Dalberg report that estimated expenditure and personnel by SDG put Goal 5 in the bottom half when it came to funding of SDGs, receiving $628 million of an almost $31 billion total UN SDG expenditure.

20. These funding patterns reflect a patriarchal world order. While many things have changed, patriarchy is relatively unyielding – it too must change to beckon a new order that is “fit for purpose” in a changing world. Women must play an equal and more active role in framing ethical and financial imperatives and defining prosperity, responsibility and accountability in a sustainable world order.

21. It is not all bad news in the changing world. In contrast to declining RR contributions, between 2002 and 2016 overall funding for UN operational activities for development more than doubled due to OR contribution growth. Moreover, after a decade marked by several economic crises, “in 2017 global economic growth is estimated to have reached 3.0 percent, a significant acceleration compared to growth of just 2.4 percent in 2016 and the highest rate of global growth recorded since 2011.” Awareness of the importance of GEWE to inclusive growth has increased. With a stronger world economy there is greater potential for governments to effectively address today’s sustainable development challenges.

UN reform

22. UN-Women’s strategic plan is being implemented in the context of ongoing UN reforms that will lead to changes in the leadership, accountability, mechanisms and capacities of the UN system, to better support countries to achieve the SDGs and meet Paris commitments on climate change. The outcomes of deliberations on the UN reform agenda offer possibilities to better leverage the entire UN system to deliver results for citizens around the world and opportunities to better integrate UN-Women’s unique expertise and exclusive focus on GEWE in global efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda’s action plan.

23. Alongside the opportunities and challenges presented by a changing world and a UN undergoing reform, action oriented and behaviour changing global people’s movements like #HeForShe, #MeToo, and #Time’sUp have emerged – building on the hard-won gains of women’s movements over time and supported by UN-Women – that are drawing widespread attention to and expanding dialogue on critical women’s empowerment and human rights issues. These feminist-driven conversations are providing new opportunities to demand reform and are bringing renewed attention to GEWE priorities.

24. Financing remains a GEWE priority. The “Time is Now” for UN-Women to be financed for its purpose. The June 2018 decision of the Secretary-General to

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11 Dalberg, System-wide Outline of the functions and Capacities of the UN Development System, Consultant’s Report (June 2017)

establish a High-Level Task Force on Financing Gender Equality as proposed by UN-Women, intended to galvanize action across the UN system for increased and targeted GEWE investments and accurate tracking of resources in this area, is a positive step towards ensuring adequate financing from all stakeholder groups for GEWE priorities worldwide.

III. A Maturing UN-Women

25. The previous section explored broad-ranging factors affecting UN-Women’s financing environment. This section focuses on UN-Women’s institutional evolution and the implications of UN reform for UN-Women’s financing.

26. UN-Women’s maturation is evidenced in its Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which was drafted in recognition of the QCPR and Secretary-General’s report on repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. The plan affirms strengthening coherence and working together, from joint planning and programming to multi-stakeholder partnerships that extend beyond the UN system. It proposes a collective approach to strategic planning and financing, through a Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support system to identify priorities and invest in activities, alongside UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

27. As presented to the Executive Board in the 2016 and 2017 SDF reports, UN-Women’s funding to financing maturation model presents the path to financial sustainability in three stages (see Figure II).

Figure II.
UN-Women’s Financial Maturation Model

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28. The Entity transitioned to Stage 2 of this model in the 2014-2017 strategic planning period by investing in and strengthening programming as well as monitoring and reporting, to better integrate its composite mandate in the delivery of development results. Now entering the 2018-2019 biennium, the Entity is moving toward Stage 3 of the model, shifting from a funding (annual fundraising) to a financing (mobilizing predictable, flexible financing for institutional as well as programming needs) approach. This evolution aligns with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) guidance on the path from funding to financing.

29. Moving from funding smaller individual projects to financing larger transformative change through strategic and joint programming requires a balanced combination of institutional and programming resources. In line with UNDG guidance, a financing approach requires that UN-Women map the financial landscape, assess its multi-year funding gap, and develop a resource mobilization strategy to address recurring funding needs in ways that prevent gaps during a strategic planning cycle.14

30. The path to a well-developed financing strategy relies on innovative financing initiatives that reflect reduced exclusive reliance on traditional and vulnerable funding sources. Innovative financing initiatives can pool funding and combine “both public and private funding streams...[and involve a] range of resource partners (governments, international financial institutions, foundations, businesses and individuals) to...mobilize adequate, sustained, flexible and predictable resources to support SDG implementation.”15

31. UN-Women is already pursuing innovative financing initiatives across thematic programming areas, such as humanitarian action and gender and statistics; through the modality of its Flagship Programming Initiatives (FPUs) and as part of the €500 million “Spotlight Initiative” to eliminate violence against women and girls, funded using a pooled “all of UN” mechanism for programming. UN-Women supports the UN’s efforts to mainstream GEWE across the SDG Fund and the Secretary-General’s Funding Compact.

32. Blended finance is being explored, in partnership with private and public finance partners, in the context of joint programmes where the issue of access to finance for women is essential, such as support to women in climate-smart agriculture or for the empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

33. A financing rather than funding approach will move UN-Women towards more predictable, multi-year resources that take into account institutional needs in order to programme and deliver effectively, an optimal funding structure as well as revenue resilience in a changing financial landscape.

34. The highest-level ambition of a financing approach is for UN-Women to contribute to UN efforts to direct larger public and private resource flows that facilitate gender-responsive investments across the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda. This includes domestic sources wherein the UN will “…[leverage] larger financial

flows by helping governments widen the tax base, access international public finance, develop domestic capital markets and put in place appropriate policy environments that catalyse investment by reducing risks.” Gender-responsive budgeting will be an important tool in this regard. GEWE and development financing have a mutually reinforcing relationship. Adequate financial resources can address gender inequalities and vice versa (e.g. when women’s paid and unpaid work is fully valued and accounted for this raises incomes, which in turn raises tax bases, which can be invested in development).

**Lessons learned and comparative advantages**

35. The findings of UN-Women’s Mid-Term Review of its second strategic plan and independent evaluations identified key lessons learned and comparative advantages that informed the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and its financing. Among identified lessons is the need for better alignment of UN-Women’s priorities and interventions with the support Member States need for implementing normative GEWE agreements. It is believed that alignment with Member State development priorities will spur interest in financing.

36. The four major comparative organizational strengths that UN-Women offers the UN system in its support of Member States priorities are: the ability to link global and national policy development for GEWE; access to the largest and deepest pool of GEWE expertise in the world; longstanding, strong relationships with women’s organizations and civil society in ways that leave no one behind; and mandated integrated contributions across the three pillars of the UN—peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development.

**Regional architecture review**

37. In 2016, UN-Women undertook an independent Regional Architecture Evaluation to assess implementation since 2012 to inform future plans for strengthening the institutional set-up. The evaluation examined the relevance, organizational effectiveness, and administrative efficiency of UN-Women’s regional architecture, including its organizational capacity to deliver it normative, operational and coordination mandate at global, regional and country levels.

38. The evaluation found that UN-Women’s strengthened field presence significantly increased results, but required stronger programmatic design and focus. UN-Women is addressing recommendations through several organizational development initiatives including change management and policy as well as technical guidance focused on specific marginalized groups. UN-Women is developing a detailed country office typology to respond to Member States’ requests for support and will pilot the concept of country office co-location in contexts where a full-fledged country office might not be warranted. The country office typology scenarios and pilots will enable UN-Women to adjust its regional architecture to the new UNCT configuration in an optimal manner.

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39. These efforts can be implemented to the best effect with support from Member States, including through standard multi-year partnership agreements, the provision of increased RR and high-quality, flexible OR funds.

**Coordination mandate**

40. Building on its normative support and UN system coordination roles, UN-Women programmes foster UN-wide partnerships to respond to Member States’ requests for support in translating global norms and standards into transformative change for women and girls by coordinating collective efforts. UN-Women’s track record in joint programming makes it well-positioned to enhance system-wide coordination, cooperation, and joint programming that leverage the relative strengths of the UN and external organizations.

41. UN-Women’s coordination role and demonstrated success in joint programming constitute a unique comparative advantage that is applied to the world’s most pressing challenges. Gender equality already features prominently in UN joint programming – with the largest share (109 of 371) of joint programmes implemented by UN Country Teams in 2016\(^1\).\(^1\)

42. UN-Women champions improved UN system accountability on GEWE through the development and implementation of the UN-SWAP and UNCT Gender Scorecard within the UN system. In 2018 UN-Women launched the Gender SWAP 2.0, building on lessons from the first SWAP aimed at strengthening collective GEWE performance.

43. UN-Women brings gender perspectives to the development of UNDAFs and other guiding documents, such as humanitarian assessments and response plans. Leveraging the UNDAFs, UN-Women uses its limited resources to strategically apply seed funding to mobilize collective resources of the UNCT for increased in-country results on GEWE.

44. Given demand for gender-responsive approaches to humanitarian response and peacebuilding, UN-Women promotes greater cooperation and complementarity between development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace, and enhances coordination between development work and humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts, as called for in the QCPR.

**UN-Women and civil society**

45. UN-Women’s robust engagement and partnerships with civil society and women’s organizations reinforce its normative and coordination work through governments and the UN system. UN-Women’s relationship with global women’s movements and other marginalized constituencies (youth, indigenous movements, unions, LGBTQ, rural and grassroots, migrants, and refugees) offers opportunities to use voices, capacities, and contributions to foster and strengthen Member State GEWE efforts and help the UN system bring women in rather than leave them behind. UN-Women’s civil society advisory groups serve as forums for dialogue and sustained UN and civil society engagement.

\(^1\) See Figure 5: http://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/UNDG_ResultsReport2016_web_final.pdf
46. RR funds support much of UN-Women’s engagement with civil society and constraints in RR funding levels inhibit the extent to which UN-Women can engage with and serve as a resource for the UN, Member State and civil society in the quest to leave no one behind.

47. In building on its relative flexibility and the lessons learned and assessment of UN-Women’s comparative advantages, the Entity continues to make strategic choices and adjustments to enhance delivery through its triple mandate. UN-Women, now seven-years strong, is mature enough to effectively and efficiently lead, promote and coordinate the UN system on GEWE in a changing world but is yet to be financed adequately for that purpose.

IV. From Funding to Financing

48. Section III outlined UN-Women’s institutional and programmatic evolution and comparative advantages that require financing. This section lays the foundation for shifting UN-Women into the third phase of its sustainable financing model.

Follow-up on the 2017 SDF

49. The 2017 SDF decision adopted by the Executive Board (UNW/2017/7), requested that UN-Women “continue to improve its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability and...continue to provide information on its programme activities...to the Executive Board.”

50. The 2017 SDF report noted that UN-Women’s OR funding gap was $111.84 million, rather than the anticipated $285 million as per projections of the 2016 SDF report. This was possible thanks to a proactive reprioritization effort by regional and country offices, coupled with catalytic use of limited programmable RR to increase fund mobilization.

51. UN-Women deepened its reprioritization and fund mobilization efforts in the second half of 2017 and first half of 2018. As a result, the provisional OR funding gap decreased to $58.1 million by 31 May 2018 and, for the first time since 2014, UN-Women could meet its OR target by the end of 2018. Unfortunately, the RR programmable funding gap has not narrowed much. The marked increase in OR against the stagnation of programmable RR means that the leveraging ratio of programmable RR to OR could exceed 1:4 in 2018 (see Annex I) 19. A programmable RR to OR leveraging ratio higher than 1:4 is not advisable for UN-Women, as a relatively new multilateral institution with a strong normative focus. Unsustainably high leveraging ratios limit UN-Women’s capacity to engage in mandated global and regional normative work, which drives programming demand and its ability to invest in project formulation, co-financing, adaptive measures and knowledge management. Increased RR mobilization is thus a precondition for sustained OR mobilization that funds the delivery of development impacts.

52. Thanks to continued efforts to strengthen programmatic focus, UN-Women has sustained the healthy downward trend in overall range of programmatic outcomes and outputs. In 2018, the total number of programme level outcomes was 438 (down

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19 A leveraging ratio of 1 to 4 was used to calculate the programmable RR requirements based on OR requirements as identified in UN-Women’s annual work plans.
from 522 in 2017 and 761 in 2016), while programme level outputs fell to 1,563 (from 1,826 in 2017 and 2,208 in 2016). Similarly, the average budget per outcome has increased to a more transformation level of $582,000 in 2018 (up from $490,000 in 2017 and $367,000 in 2016). This increased programmatic focus enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Women, reduces the risk of overlaps and facilitates partnership with other development agencies (see Figure III).

Figure III.
**Programme level outcomes and outputs**

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<tr>
<td># of programme level outcomes</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of programme level outputs</td>
<td>2,872</td>
<td>2,376</td>
<td>2,208</td>
<td>1,826</td>
<td>1,563</td>
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Average Budget/Outcome

- **2014**: 985 Outcomes, $367K
- **2015**: 797 Outcomes, $490K
- **2016**: 761 Outcomes, $582K
- **2017**: 522 Outcomes
- **2018**: 438 Outcomes

53. RR funded programme development support to UN-Women’s regional and country offices, as well as the consolidation of UN-Women’s programming has allowed the development of a robust OR funding pipeline. This has translated into a 60% growth of UN-Women’s programming portfolio along all strategic objectives (see Figure IV). Note that UN-Women’s gender-responsive budgeting and planning was integrated into the leadership and governance strategic objective in 2018 and thus the even sharper increase.
UN-Women portfolio growth by outcome area

54. UN-Women benefits from high-quality, soft-earmarked OR, through its FPIs. To date UN-Women has coordinated four multi-stakeholder FPI donor roundtables (Women’s Access to Justice in July 2017, Climate Resilient Agriculture in October 2016, Women’s Engagement in Peace and Security in October 2016, and Making Every Woman and Girl Count in May 2016), generating roughly $120 million in firm multi-year programming pledges. UN-Women plans to hold two additional roundtables in 2018. Adjusted projections indicate FPIs representing well above 70% of the organization’s programming portfolio by 2020. Programme focus and growth has been supported by RR investments, though limited.

UN-Women’s revenue trends

55. The type of funding that UN-Women receives affects its efficiency and effectiveness. Both the quantity and quality of the funding sources – assessed contributions; RR (core); and OR (non-core) – determine the Entity’s organizational development, operational and programmatic agenda and its ability to deliver efficiently and effectively on its triple mandate.

56. During the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, important factors affected the organization’s ability to meet its funding targets. Positive trends included:

i. Demonstrated political will of Member States to promote a gender equality agenda, grounded in the realization that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all of the SDG targets;

\[20\] In this figure, 2018 data are based on 2018 Annual Work Plans, while previous years are based on actual expenditure. In the current SP 2018-2021, the “National Planning and Budgeting” thematic area was merged into the “Leadership and Political Participation” thematic area.
ii. Increased recognition of UN-Women’s proven ability to leverage the breadth of the UN system for desired outcomes;

iii. Progress in delivering measurable programmatic outcomes aligned with global normative priorities through FPIs; and

iv. Heightened awareness and increased global movements for women’s rights to equality, safety and justice and greater engagement with and from non-traditional actors, such as men, local leaders, religious leaders and the private sector.

57. These positive trends were somewhat offset by the constraints in Member States’ official development assistance priorities and obligations, including escalated pressure resulting from the migration crisis and currency volatility, particularly with respect to RR funding, which affected UN-Women’s revenue.

58. UN-Women received $146.4 million in RR revenue in 2017, which represented 38.7% of the total $369 million in contributions. While RR revenue grew by 3.3% from 2016 to 2017, it did not reach a level adequate for institution-building of a new organization or the IB target of $200 million. With the exception of 2014, RR contributions to the Entity have not met IB projections presented to the Executive Board.

59. In 2017, voluntary (RR and OR) contributions from Member States represented over 80% of UN-Women’s total revenue, demonstrating their vital role in determining UN-Women’s revenue environment. The largest share, or 56.6% of UN-Women of Member State revenue was received as OR (see Figure V). Assessed contributions accounted for 2.2% of total revenue. This drove the Entity towards a more short-term organizational development, operational and programmatic agenda, impacting its ability to deliver efficiently and effectively on its triple mandate.

Figure V.
Total revenue by source, 2017
60. The following paragraphs detail revenue trends by source of funds.

Assessed contributions

61. Assessed contributions are allocated to UN-Women from the UN’s regular budget as approved by the General Assembly, and are generated through appropriations from Member States. In 2016, UN-Women received the smallest proportional share of UN assessed resources, representing 0.05% of the over $14.5 billion in UN assessed contributions distributed across receiving agencies. Other agencies with composite mandates enjoy much greater support. For example, UNEP’s share of expenses covered by assessed contributions was 40% in 2016.

62. In 2017, UN-Women received $8.3 million (or 2.2% of its overall resources) from assessed contributions to support normative intergovernmental processes, civil society and UN system coordination work. Between 2011 and 2017 the amount of assessed contributions received grew minimally, from the starting point of $7 million in 2011.

63. The General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/70/133, noted with concern that UN-Women had to draw on voluntary contributions to enable it to carry out its full mandate. On this basis, in 2018 UN-Women advocated for and received a small increase in assessed contributions in the form of five positions in 2018.

The value of regular resources

64. While UN-Women experienced a small growth in RR from 2016 and 2017, RR remain inadequate. The total funding from RR contributions was surpassed by the growth of OR in 2015 (see Figure VI).

Figure VI:
UN-Women contribution by donor type 2011-2017
65. RR form the bedrock of UN-Women’s institutional existence and development impact.21 RR are voluntary funds that are un-earmarked and can be spent flexibly to support UN-Women’s institutional budget, oversight and accountability functions as well as programming strategy and formulation which leverages OR funding for development results.

66. Member States are almost the Entity’s sole source of RR; 107 of them provided 97% or $143 million of the total of $146.4 million in RR received in 2017. The remaining 3% of RR revenue was generated from private sector contributions. Of the $143 million in RR from Member States, 90% or $132.4 million was provided by countries from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development—Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). Contributions from other Member State donors represented only 10% of total RR in 2017.

67. The Government of Sweden is UN-Women’s largest financial supporter and an important strategic partner. While European countries have historically been among UN-Women’s top RR contributors, there are diverse levels of engagement. In addition to Sweden, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Finland are among the strongest RR supporters, while France, Germany, and the Netherlands underwrite a lesser share of UN-Women RR than they do of other agencies and France has, to date, been contributing less RR to UN-Women than China. Non-OECD-DAC contributions grew from $8.4 million in 2013 to $14.2 million in 2017.

68. RR enable demand-driven institutional and programming growth and accountability. RR also serve as seed money to mobilize OR, which is also directed at comprehensive programme implementation that helps Member States translate global standards into policies and results that transform lives and accelerate development outcomes. RR support investments in innovation, and offer UN-Women the flexibility to strategically manage activities and intervene and respond to crises with greater speed and in collective UN action. RR fuel UN-Women’s role as a powerful global GEWE advocate, catalyst and coordinator and allow for reduced administrative costs by providing a reliable financing environment.

69. In 2017, UN-Women spent $142 million in RR as follows: 37% to advocacy, leadership and management, with the vast majority of expenses incurred at regional and country levels; 29% to corporate administration, including human resources, finance, budgeting, risk management, legal, procurement, ICTs, security, oversight, evaluation and audit; 17% on project formulation, piloting and technical support; 7% to partnerships, communication and resource mobilization; 4% went to UN, intergovernmental and civil society coordination; 4% was spent on policy leadership and knowledge and result management; and 2% was directed to the “others” category.

70. The 2017 Executive Board SDF decision (UNW/2017/7) recognized “that sufficient regular resources are important to fully and effectively deliver on the

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21 A portion of RR are used to finance the institutional budget (the 2018-2019 estimate is for $203.8 million). Remaining RR are distributed as programmable core with 80% allocated to the field as resources for programming and 20% allocated to HQ. This allocation is made in accordance with the decision of the UNIFEM Consultative Committee at its 44th session in March 2004. The portion allocated to RR programmable depends on the total IB and available RR.
implementation of UN-Women’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021; notes that regular resources enable UN-Women to plan ahead, be responsive and strategic; strengthen oversight functions (evaluation, audit, and investigation) and accountability; contribute to strengthening UN system coherence and coordination; and leverage other resources to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment.”

71. This decision supports UN-Women’s position that RR are critical for ensuring adequate capacity to deliver on its triple and multilateral mandate and provide continued substantive leadership and innovation around specific GEWE objectives.

72. In line with current UN reform efforts, RR also enable UN-Women’s engagement in gender-mainstreaming and coordination in inter-agency efforts. RR enable UN-Women to promote accountability, including regular monitoring of the UN system-wide progress on GEWE. This need is expected to increase in the context of UN reforms. Adequate financing of RR in line with targets is essential (see Figure VII).

Figure VII
Regular resources versus IB projections, 2011-2017

Other resources
73. Voluntary OR contributions from traditional and non-traditional partners began to outpace the level of RR contributions to UN-Women in 2015. This presents a risk as RR drive OR funding.

74. OR contributions totalled $214.2 million in 2017 and have grown by an average of 18% per year between 2011 and 2017, and by 20% or $36.1 million between 2016 and 2017. Some 131 funding partners contributed to UN-Women’s OR revenue in 2017. This growth is as a direct result of RR investment in programming design, piloting, business development and monitoring systems.
75. OR growth has allowed UN-Women to translate institutional investments into significantly increased impacts for women and girls on the ground in support of Member State National Development Plans as fuelled by:

- UN-Women’s RR driven programmatic leadership capacity on the design and oversight of large-scale programmes that are implemented with other agencies.
- RR investments in UN-Women’s own programme and monitoring systems that improve the quality of proposals, accelerate the pace of programme inception, deliver high-quality and on-time reporting, prevent fraud, improve value for money, and support unqualified audit opinions on UN-Women financial statements.

76. Together, three donor segments (Member States, the European Union [EU] and UN agencies) accounted for 90% of UN-Women’s total OR revenue in 2017. UN-Women’s OR growth trend has primarily been driven by Member States and the EU, which contributed 71%, or $154 of $214.2 million of total OR revenue in 2017. Partnerships with 24 UN agencies, through joint programming and pooled funds, accounted for another 19.5% or $41.8 million of total OR revenue in 2017. Joint programming partnerships are expected to increase in significance under UN system reform, which will offer more opportunities for UN-Women to integrate its specialized expertise.

77. In 2017, growth in OR contributions occurred across all donor segments, with Member State contributions growing by 10.8% from 2016 levels, UN Agency funding growing by 40.7% from 2016 levels, and private sector contributions growing by 92% from 2016 levels. These trends show that UN-Women’s investments in Stage 2 of its financial sustainability model are paying off.

78. Even though the overall OR growth trend is positive, OR contributions to the Entity have not met IB projections since the Entity was established either, with the exception of in 2014 (see Figure VIII). Moreover, OR growth depends on the ability to convert money into development results, which in turn relies on RR-funded institutional capacity.

Figure VIII.
Other resources versus IB projections, 2011-2017
Private sector RR and OR

79. Private sector funding has increased sharply. In 2017, 70 private sector and “other” category donors contributed a total of $21.6 million in combined RR and OR revenue to UN-Women, an increase of 57% from the $13.7 million received in 2016 and 191% from the $7.4 million received in 2015. UN-Women receives contributions from several private sector donor segments including corporations and corporate foundations; large foundations; National Committees for UN-Women; philanthropic giving, such as from high-net-worth individuals and influencers (HNWIs); and giving from the general public, among other sources.

80. Given this growth trend, UN-Women intends to strategically deepen engagement with private sector donor segments, particularly through the FPIs, and invest more in public giving, primarily through its National Committees, to reduce its almost exclusive reliance on Member States for RR funding. UN-Women’s Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy 2018-2021 provides a detailed strategic approach for the organization in this regard.

81. While the private sector has not been a significant source of RR revenue to the Entity overall, there has been an increase over time. In each fiscal year from 2011 to 2014, RR contributions from the private sector were less than $1 million, with contribution totals growing to $1.4 million in 2015, and reaching $3.4 million in 2016 with a slight decline to $3.2 million in 2017 (representing 3% of total RR in that year).

82. Private sector contributors to UN-Women’s OR represents the larger source of growth in this segment. Some 39 donors (12 National Committees and 27 other private sector partners) contributed $14.4 million to UN-Women’s OR revenue in 2017; an increase from the $7.5 million generated in 2016 and the $4 million

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22 Other donors include local governments, sports clubs, various institutes and organizations, among other miscellaneous donors. In 2017 this segment of donors provided a total of $4.6 million to UN-Women.

23 In 2017, UN-Women received an additional $284,600 in RR revenue from miscellaneous donors.
generated in 2015. The largest share of the $14.4 million raised in 2017 was received from foundations, which provided $6.8 million, followed by corporations, which provided $3.9 million and National Committees, which provided $3.7 million.

83. UN-Women is increasingly engaging with large foundations, with multi-year contributions ranging from $400,000 to $10 million, including through its FPIs. Given that 20% of UN-Women private sector OR revenue was provided by corporations, the organization intends to harness efforts to date that have resulted in over 1,800 CEOs from around the world signing on to the Women’s Empowerment Principles, among other coalition-based strategic engagements, like the Unstereotype Alliance and the Global Innovation for Change Coalition.

84. In 2017 National Committees provided combined RR and OR revenue totalling $6.3 million, a significant increase from the $1.8 million they raised just two years earlier in 2015 and demonstrating further growth from the $4.6 million they raised in 2016. Given their increasing potential, UN-Women completed an assessment of the fundraising landscape in which its National Committees operate. The National Committees’ potential to grow individual and corporate giving over the period of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 was assessed and found highly promising. UN-Women will work to strengthen individual giving through its National Committees, and increase philanthropic giving (HNWIIs).

Figure IX.
Corporate and foundation overall contributions to UN-Women, 2011-2017

![Corporate and foundation overall contributions to UN-Women, 2011-2017](image)

**Funding gaps and their impacts**

85. In 2017 UN-Women’s total RR and OR funding gap was $109 million against its IB projections, with the gap totalling $199 million over the 2016-2017 biennium, despite increased demand for UN-Women support. Funding gaps impact UN-Women’s growth, effectiveness and efficiency and GEWE efforts of the UN system and Member States, as well as other actors, which rely on UN-Women’s expertise and support (see Figure X).

Figure X.
RR and OR funding gaps based on IB projections 2011-2017
86. In decision 2017/6 UN-Women’s Executive Board took note of the IB estimates for the 2018-2019 biennium of projected voluntary contributions of $880 million for 2018-2019 comprised of $400 million in RR and $480 million in OR, which keep income projections at similar levels to the 2016-2017 biennium.

87. As per the 2018-2019 IB, 83.8% of resources would be devoted to development activities (including development effectiveness), 12.8% to management and 2.9% to United Nations development coordination, and 0.3% for special purpose activities.

88. The 2018-2019 IB estimate of $400 million in RR is based on the biennium RR budget of $203 million in RR funding to support UN-Women’s pursuit of development effectiveness, UN coordination and management activities, in line with strategic plan organizational effectiveness and efficiency outputs.

89. OR funding requirements, as reflected in the organization’s 2018 programming work plans are also based on the 2018-2019 IB OR estimate of $480 million (see Annex II). It is envisioned that 2018 will be the year that the programming funding gap will be closed. This is however dependent on closing the programmable RR funding gap of $22 million, which in turn will only be possible if the annual RR target of $200 million in revenue is attained.

90. The gap between the projections of the cost of implementing the strategic plan and the actual financial resources received represents missed opportunities to improve the lives of billions of women and girls around the world.

91. UN-Women is a lean, flexible and people-centred UN agency that supports the UN system to promote GEWE coherence and coordination and reach those most left behind. In 2017, UN-Women contributed to the amendment or reform of 27 laws in 17 countries to strengthen women’s rights, potentially benefiting 164 million women and girls; assisted women and girls in 31 crisis-affected countries; and provided 35,000 women and girls with economic empowerment and livelihood services in humanitarian situations. Since 2014, some 2 billion women and girls live in countries where policy frameworks for women’s economic empowerment were strengthened, over 1.5 billion women and girls are better protected from violence through stronger legal frameworks, and more than 1.48 billion women and girls are
benefitting from an increase in GEWE budget allocations as a result of UN-Women’s support of Member States.

92. While UN-Women continues to transform lives with the resources it has been entrusted with, its organizational sustainability is threatened by significant and persistent RR funding gaps. If UN-Women is to be “fit for purpose” and financially sustainable, it requires adequate RR financial investments.

93. An annual increase of $60 million in RR contributions from Member States would unlock UN-Women’s third stage of financial sustainability. The increase represents roughly 0.28% of all Member State contributions to Chief Executives Board agencies. It is therefore a relatively achievable target. UN-Women is proposing a 2020 GEWE Compact that runs alongside the Secretary-General’s funding compact for the development system, much like the gender parity strategy does, to drive efforts towards an additional $60 million RR per year in funding for UN-Women to achieve the 2018-2019 IB RR annual target of $200 million, which would in turn drive projected OR revenue growth. This Member State mobilization effort could be led by UN-Women RR donor champions that can attest to the value of RR investments.

94. This small increase would allow UN-Women to make the important institutional investments that would underpin financial sustainability and delivery of GEWE impacts projected in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021:

- Greater investments in coordination of GEWE to multiply the catalytic effect of UN-Women as the UN reforms
- More investments in preparation for global GEWE 2020 reviews and various commemorations. Investment is required to assist the world in looking back and planning forward to the 2030 Agenda. The year 2020 marks the review of progress 25 years after the Beijing Platform for Action was agreed and 20 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. It is the year that closes Africa’s decade of women, the year that UN-Women turns a decade old and the UN celebrates three-quarters of a century of existence.
- More investments in systems to improve accountability, transparency of data and direct marketing outreach to the public as a significant future source of RR funding
- Greater investments in innovation and knowledge management to better position UN-Women to address 21st century challenges and UN GEWE coordination needs

95. UN-Women is a valuable asset in the UN system’s effort to support Member States to accelerate progress towards a more inclusive, peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world in which women and girls, in addition to men and boys, enjoy their full human rights as actors and benefactors of the 2030 Agenda.

96. A 2020 GEWE Compact that complements the Secretary-General’s reform and gender parity efforts, directed at investing in UN-Women, would enable the Entity to achieve annual RR funding of approximately $200 million. Given UN reform and an increasingly challenging global context, particularly the backlash against gains won for women and girls, the time is now to commit to a financing model that ensures that UN-Women is able to deliver even more effectively and efficiently on
its triple mandate in ways that improve the lives of the billions of women and girls around the world.

**Impacts of Donor Specific Agreements on Financing**

97. The 2017 Executive Board SDF decision (UNW/2017/7) requested that UN-Women “provide information on the impact of donor-specific agreements on transaction costs and efficiency of UN-Women, as part of the next report of UN-Women on structured dialogue on financing.”

98. In 2017, approximately 35% of all donor agreements were non-standard. UN-Women has put in place a number of measures to make the processing of non-standard agreements as efficient and effective as possible, including: (i) an on-line clearance system to automate and streamline the process; and (ii) a general prohibition on the negotiation of non-standard agreements below the value of $150,000, unless exceptional criteria are met.

99. Nevertheless, there are significant costs associated with non-standard agreements, as relevant experts from legal and finance teams must be consulted during the clearance process, and consultations may extend to audit, evaluation, budget, communications and other areas as needed. It also involves a substantive administrative overhead in facilitating the consultation and negotiation process. Non-standard agreements require approximately one to six months of negotiation.

100. The time taken to negotiate non-standard agreements delays programme implementation and leads to the overuse of support services (in whole or in part) for this purpose, which comes at a cost. Non-standard agreements require UN-Women to implement exceptional measures or comply with extraordinary obligations, outside its standard policies and practices, which also involve additional overhead and administrative costs.

101. UN-Women is pleased that it has been able to negotiate 10 “framework agreements”, establishing set terms and conditions for certain donors, however, each framework agreement is different, which imposes a significant burden on the Entity in complying with different legal and financial regimes. It is also noted that, notwithstanding these framework agreements, these same donors still seek to negotiate different conditions at the country or local level.

### V. Conclusion

102. The benefits of more predictable and flexible multi-year funding of strategic plans are high for the UN and Member States. Flexible, predictable and adequate funding will enable UN-Women to better support Member State efforts to transform women’s and girls’ lives and meet the SDG targets, including by coordinating the UN system on GEWE in ways that translate global norms into benefits that deliver on national agendas.

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24 Framework Agreements have been negotiated with the African Development Bank, the Department for International Development, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Ford Foundation, the Swedish International Development Agency, and the European Union, as well as the governments of Australia, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland.
103. Predictable RR will allow UN-Women to continue generating and sustaining relationships with the widening range of stakeholders that support Member States. UN-Women already leverages RR to convene stakeholders to address human rights and development challenges all over the world.

104. RR ensure that UN-Women can design, pilot, replicate and scale-up successful programmes and develop knowledge products for use by various stakeholders, even in countries where UN-Women is not present. As demand for gender-responsive approaches in humanitarian action grows, RR have been invested in efforts to mainstream GEWE in humanitarian action and crisis response, which is key to the survival of families and the eradication of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in that sector.

105. Additionally, RR support UN-Women’s critical normative and coordination work through leadership and advocacy within the UN system; promoting accountability of the UN to its GEWE commitments; and by engaging in system-wide and inter-agency forums and efforts to promote and advance GEWE at all levels and in all countries.

106. As we approach 2020, Beijing +25, Resolution 1325 +20, and UN-Women’s tenth anniversary, this is the moment for Member States to ensure that the Entity is adequately resourced to meet growing demands and to ensure that it is well placed to adapt to changes required by UN reform.
Annex I

Detailed overview of UN-Women’s programming RR and OR funding requirements and funding gap\textsuperscript{25}

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Total programming funding requirement (OR + RR programmable)</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>351.25</td>
<td>448.75</td>
<td>417.91</td>
<td>437.09</td>
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<td>Field OR requirement</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>283.4</td>
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<td>HQ OR requirement</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61.33</td>
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<td>Field core requirement - indicative target of 25% non-core</td>
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<td>68.25</td>
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<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.33</td>
<td>16.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Total funding available (OR + RR programmable available)</td>
<td>201.8</td>
<td>239.2</td>
<td>269.22</td>
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<td>Field OR available (Revenue + Carry Over)</td>
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<td>145</td>
<td>163.02</td>
<td>159.6</td>
<td>154.47</td>
<td>213.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>HQ OR available (Revenue + Carry Over)</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62.89</td>
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<td>43.4</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>46.26</td>
<td>49.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>HQ RR allocation (only allocation)</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Total funding gap (OR + RR programmable) = (a) - (b)</td>
<td>113.2</td>
<td>112.1</td>
<td>179.53</td>
<td>137.23</td>
<td>148.08</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>135.98</td>
<td>113.4</td>
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<td>HQ OR funding gap</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-1.56</td>
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<td>HQ RR funding gap</td>
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<td>1.07</td>
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<td>(d) Total OR funding gap</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>143.98</td>
<td>111.84</td>
<td>125.82</td>
<td>58.1</td>
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<td>Total RR programmable funding gap*</td>
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<td>35.55</td>
<td>25.39</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>22.26</td>
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</table>

\textsuperscript{25} The annual “funding gap” is the amount of funds needed that are not covered by the available budget in the form of pledges or signed grants at the start of the year. Funding requirements are identified from UN-Women’s Results Management System.
Annex II

Annual work plan funding gap as of June 2018

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
<th>Funding Gap</th>
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<td><strong>Global</strong></td>
<td><strong>522 M</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Field</strong></td>
<td><strong>322 M</strong></td>
<td>$75 M (23%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regional</strong></td>
<td><strong>62 M</strong></td>
<td>$8 M (11%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bureau A</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 M</strong></td>
<td>$2 M (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bureau B</strong></td>
<td><strong>76 M</strong></td>
<td>$1 M (13%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EDO/DMA</strong></td>
<td><strong>43 M</strong></td>
<td>$38 M (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Planned Budget**

**Total DRF Budget**

**Total OEEF Budget**