UN-Women Mid-Term Review
Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown
Process update and next steps
Objectives of Mid-Term Review

- To take stock of the achievements to date, reflect on lessons learned and recalibrate the Entity’s strategic direction, programming and business processes to strengthen its efforts for the full realisation of envisioned results within the second half of the time frame of the Strategic Plan.

- To set the stage for UN-Women’s direction in 2022-2025 and beyond.

- To answer the four key questions:
  1. What are the implications of UN Development System reforms and other key developments, such as Beijing +25 review process, to UN Women’s corporate strategy and implementation modalities?
  2. How and where does UN Women’s programmatic focus need to be further improved to make a greater impact?
  3. How can UN Women leverage its partnership approach and the UN coordination mandate to boost its contribution to the implementation of Agenda 2030?
  4. What adjustments are needed to our results framework (indicators, targets, resources, etc.) to better articulate the changes UN Women generates, including its efforts to Leave No One Behind?
What has been done on MTR/EDAR

**August- September 2019**
- ToR of MTR Reference Group finalised
- Desk Review (Phase I)
- Development of MTR Roadmap

**October-November 2019**
- 3 Oct: ExBo Informal - briefing on MTR Roadmap
- 8 Oct: MTR Reference Group kick-off
- Desk Review (Phase II)
- Data analysis

**December 2019 – January 2020**
- Data analysis
- Completion of desk review
- Dec. Workshop with MTR Reference Group
- Jan. Meeting on Key messages with Reference Group
- 27 Jan. 2020 ExB Informal on MTR update

**February-March 2020**
- 14 Feb: ExB session on MTR update
- UNDS Reform survey with COs
- Data collection/validation for 2019 EDAR
- Internal consultation and revision of key messages per MTR question with MTR Reference Group
Harmonization with UNDP, UNICEF & UNFPA

- Joint ExBo briefing with common chapter partners
- Harmonised reporting on common chapter and QCPR
- Review together the implications of the System-Wide Strategic Document (SWSD) and the new generation of UNDAFs (UNSDCF) as a planning and monitoring framework
- Rationalise reporting processes
## Next steps for MTR/EDAR

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<td>Submission of EDAR/MTR Narrative Report for translation</td>
<td>Mid-April</td>
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<td>Submission of annexes of EDAR/MTR Report</td>
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<td>• Overview of 2019 financial results</td>
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<td>• Joint common chapter results report</td>
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<td>• Joint 2017-2021 QCPR implementation report</td>
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<td>• Data companion and scorecard</td>
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<td>• Proposed adjustments to the IRRF</td>
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<td>• Summary results of the Fund for Gender Equality and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women</td>
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<td>• Online Strategic Plan portal with 2019 data against IRRF</td>
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<th>With the Executive Board</th>
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<td>Virtual joint briefing session on MTR, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF</td>
<td>April 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 10:00-11:30am</td>
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<td>Informal Session on MTR and 2019 EDAR</td>
<td>May or June (TBC)</td>
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Tentative Timeline for development of next Strategic Plan 2022-2025

2020
- Informal consultation: overview of the issues that the new SP will need to take into account

2021
- Informal consultation: first draft SP incl. results framework and IB presented for feedback
- Annual session: formal presentation of draft SP
- Second regular session: Executive Board reviews and approves final draft of SP


Presentation of SP Roadmap
- Informal consultation with the ExB: building blocks, scenarios and options
- Integrating QCPR guidance
- Informal briefing: Final presentation of draft SP before annual session
Overview of 2019 results performance against Strategic Plan IRRF & Findings from UNDS Reform Survey
• 71% of assessible indicators (Development Results and Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency) achieved 90% or more of 2019 milestones
• The 2021 target has been met for over a quarter of assessible indicators
• 60% of Development Results (DR) outcome indicators with sufficient data demonstrated the intended direction towards 2021 targets
• 2019 results demonstrate strong improvements in quantitative and qualitative orientation for Leave No One Behind (LNOB)
  o 43 field offices disaggregated results by basic demographic characteristics (age, sex, geographic location)
  o 13 field offices disaggregated results by vulnerable population groups (disability, migratory, HIV status)
Development Results (DR):

- Across all Outcome areas, strong progress (at least 90 per cent attainment of 2019 milestone) was achieved for 74 per cent of assessable indicators.
- Outcome 2 (Leadership & Governance) and 5 (Women, Peace and Security & Humanitarian Action) have the strongest performance against 2019 milestones based on DRF output level indicators.
  - For Leadership & Governance, this is driven by very strong performance particularly in political participation (output 4) and gender-responsive budgets (output 5).
  - For Women, Peace and Security & Humanitarian, this is driven by very strong performance in both areas, with all output level indicators far exceeding 2019 milestones. These areas are being reviewed during the MTR process for changes supportive of greater ambition in articulation of results.

Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency (OEE):

- Strong progress was achieved for 68 per cent of indicators at the output level.
- OEE 2 (Partnerships) has the strongest performance against 2019 milestones.
Key Findings from UNDS Reform Survey

The survey confirms that the UNDS Reforms have brought about positive changes for fulfilment of UN Women’s mandate. However current funding landscape and resource mobilization practices disincentivize UN entities from increasing collaboration to mobilize resources.

- Growing opportunities for UN Women to engage with the rest of UN Country Team, including via Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO), on gender equality and women’s empowerment (joint advocacy, joint programming).

- Participatory and consultative planning and implementation processes (CCA/UNSDCF) seen to achieve more cohesive and coherent interventions and to encourage joint work among UN agencies and partners – including on inclusive strategies for Leave No One Behind.

- UN Women country offices are mostly confident about their ability to positively influence the CCA and UNSDCF in favor of GEWE. However, top concerns among UN Women COs are lack of human resources and increase in workload.

- Unless funding & financing practices change, continuing competition for scarce resources will remain key obstacle for more joined up, coherent approaches and joint programming on GEWE.
Key Lessons learned and Way Forward
Preliminary messages
MTR 4 key questions

1. What are the implications of **UN Development System reforms and other key developments**, such as **Beijing +25** review process, to UN Women’s corporate strategy and implementation modalities?

2. How and where does UN Women’s **programmatic focus** need to be further improved to make a greater impact?

3. How can UN Women **leverage its partnership approach and the UN coordination mandate** to boost its contribution to the implementation of Agenda 2030?

4. What adjustments are needed to our results framework (indicators, targets, resources, etc.) to better articulate the changes UN Women generates, including its efforts to **Leave No One Behind**?
MTR Q1: New development landscape and operating context

**Growing opportunities**

- **Momentum** around multiple 2020 anniversaries and rising movements to accelerate Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment along humanitarian, development and peace nexus.
- In context of COVID-19 crisis, opportunity to spearhead **gender responsive actions**
- UN Reforms will likely spur demand for UN-Women to provide **cross-cutting thought leadership and expertise** on gender equality and women’s empowerment within the UN system.
- **Changes in operating environment present opportunities** for UN-Women to deliver on its Strategic Plan: 2030 Agenda and LNOB more strongly embedded across the UN; stronger UN coordination architecture, including strengthened ties with DCO and RCOs, increase in collaboration including joint programmes and joint advocacy.

**Persisting or emerging challenges**

- Beijing +25 review shows **increased contestation of GEWE agenda and socio-political polarization on GEWE issues.**
- **COVID-19** threatens to reverse hard won gains on gender equality, while also increasing women and girls’ vulnerability to COVID-19 transmission and impacts.
- Emerging developments related to **climate change, pandemics, and technology** present context into which a gender perspective must be urgently and increasingly better incorporated.
- New **operating environment presents challenges** given the persisting competition for resources, the size and capacity of UN Women, including where it is a non-resident agency, increase in demands for UN coordination, recurrent questioning of gender equality as a guiding principle.
1. COVID-19 crisis presents a new reality around which UN Women will pivot. Challenges and opportunities highlighted through the crisis as well as Beijing +25 review reaffirm relevance of UN Women’s strategic priorities. Accordingly, UN Women will sharpen its strategic engagement with key partners and stakeholders for full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, accelerated achievement of SDGs and Women Peace Security priorities defined in UNSCR 1325.

2. Operationally, to enhance effectiveness and efficiency UN Women is optimizing different types of field presence to ensure right capacity is in place, including where it is non resident, reorganizing HQ structures and enhancing internal processes & governance.

3. UN Women will continue to seize opportunities brought by the reforms and COVID-19 crisis and leverage the UN system to champion gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) across all priority areas. This includes strengthening gender mainstreaming more systematically into UNSDCFs and CCAs, utilizing such tools as Gender Equality Country Profiles and UNCT-SWAP gender scorecard.

4. UN Women will leverage the UN Funding Compact and available sources of funds to strengthen interagency collaboration and reduce competition for resources, partnering with others as best as possible.
Growing opportunities

- UN Women has made **clear contributions** to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. Its interventions are **relevant and effective**, with evaluations highlighting notable achievements in engendering national frameworks. By 2019, UN Women has achieved or exceeded over 70% of its development results’ milestones.

- **COVID-19** will have far reaching gendered implications, including exacerbating violence against women and further stunting women's engagement in the labour market. A **gender responsive response is critical** to both curb infection rates and enable resilience and recovery. This new context requires UN Women to intentionally bring a COVID-19 lens within our programmatic focus.

- For a greater impact, UN Women could sharpen its focus on **holistic, integrated and cross-cutting** strategies; better articulate its comparative advantage; and strengthen the **quality of its programming**, including through evidence-based design.

Persisting or emerging challenges

- In spite of great accomplishments, further attention is required to achieve sufficient scale for a **greater tangible impact**—sustaining and transforming policy gains into results in the lives of women and girls.

- UN Women has made valiant efforts to improve its programmatic focus (e.g. Flagship Programme Initiatives, reducing No. of outputs/outcomes in Strategic Plan and Strategic Notes). Still, given limited resources, the Entity has **challenges in remaining focused while seizing rising opportunities** and responding to emerging needs.
MTR Q2: Improving UN-Women’s programmatic focus for greater impact

1. UN Women will continue to strengthen its programmatic focus in line with its comparative advantages vis-à-vis emerging needs from the changing context (esp. COVID-19) in line with its mandate and to accelerate progress through the UN Decade of Action. Specifically, UN Women will refine its ToCs under each Outcome Area, and will ensure that these are COVID-intentional.

2. UN-Women will hone its efforts on evidence-based approaches with a focus on scale and sustainability, including through applying an intentional LNOB lens, and reinforcing the linkages between the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

3. UN-Women will leverage its new structure and refine its programme and project management to strengthen the linkages between its triple mandate for greater impact.

4. To strengthen alignment of programming with strategic priorities, rectifying the current imbalance between regular and other resources is a key priority. UN Women will enhance efforts to mobilise regular resources including through investments in its National Committees and strengthening shared value partnerships with the private sector.
Growing opportunities

1. UN-Women focused its engagement in UN reform in ensuring GEWE figures centrally in new/revised structures and processes in support of 2030 Agenda and SDGs. Reform provides an opportunity for UN Women to lead system on gender mainstreaming, including gender-responsive analysis for CCAs and planning to ensure GEWE is fully integrated in joint programming and UNDSDCF priorities.

2. All staff surveyed as part of evaluation found common chapter either key driver or positive influence for improved collaboration.

3. UN-Women’s long-standing engagement with civil society is clear comparative advantage to leverage within the UN System. Entity should also better leverage its experience using grant-making modality to support CSOs and the women’s movement.

4. UN-Women can and does acts as bridge builder between different stakeholders and can play a unique convening role in initiatives like the WEPs or Unstereotype Alliance. It has been effective in coordinating and building support for GEWE.

Persisting or emerging challenges

1. The emergence of COVID-19 has demanded rapid reorientation of partnerships. It has also jeopardised resources in private sector partnerships. Gender equality needs to be central to UN coordinated response to COVID-19 and funding mechanisms.

2. UN-Women needs to better focus its partnerships on achieving results for women and girls, rather than partnership for partnership’s sake, with its energy and resources focused on highest-value partnerships.

3. UN-Women also needs to establish a stronger networked, whole-of-organisation approach to partnership management.

4. UN-Women needs to do better at clarifying and communicating results it achieves through its UN coordination role and partnerships.

5. Need for clearer organizational approach to strengthening civil society and bolster partnerships with local civil society as well as youth organizations.

6. Common chapter as separate initiative should be reviewed in context of broader UNDS reform and required collaboration across the entire UN system.
1. UN Women will review all its work on partnership and UN coordination in the context of COVID-19 to pivot where appropriate and necessary both in terms of which partnerships it prioritizes and how it leverages existing partnerships.

2. Building on coordination and accountability mechanisms, UN Women will strengthen focus on results driven coordination through enhanced focus on a critical mass of joint programs, gender responsive UNSDCFs and systematic mainstreaming of gender in a range of programmatic contexts including in the Humanitarian/ Development/ Peace Nexus.

3. To accelerate progress towards GEWE, UN Women will increase the coherence, focus and results orientation of its engagement modalities with the view to maximize shared-value partnerships with strategic actors.

4. UN Women will invest in strengthened systems and approaches to better measure and communicate the results of UN-Women’s partnerships, communication and substantive UN coordination work to inform the development of its next Strategic Plan 2022-2025.
UN Women’s efforts to improve the culture of results-based management (RBM) and enhance monitoring and evaluation capacities have yielded gains and need to be continued.

A more coherent understanding of impact at the global, regional and country levels needs to be developed, alongside continued strengthening of UN-Women’s results and reporting architecture, including for better capturing contributions to higher-level results.

Evaluations have recommended that UN-Women better articulate its contributions to the SDGs and foreground the principle of leaving no one behind in its results framework. While 2019 reporting on work with marginalized populations was much improved compared to 2018, this area requires continued strengthening.

Further improvement is needed in the current results framework to better measure the effectiveness of organization's response to crises.
1. Specific adjustments to the current results framework will be recommended based on analyses through the Mid-term Review and the first two years of results reporting. Adjustments will be limited and will ensure the integrity of the IRRF is preserved, allowing for a continued sense of trajectory.

2. Based on lessons learnt and challenges identified from the current results framework, in its next Strategic Plan UN-Women will make further efforts to better (1) measure results in an cross-cutting manner; (2) measure development results realised through its UN coordination and normative work; (3) capture the impact of its work—including through LNOB; and (4) articulate its contributions to the SDGs through the UN Decade of Action.

3. UN Women continues to strengthen harmonised and integrated reporting with other UN agencies in response to the UNDS Reforms, as well as strengthening accountability and transparency in line with standards and commitments.
Polling Questions

1) In the presentation by UN-Women, were there any findings that you found very relevant and critical to inform UN Women’s work?

2) To what extent was the presentation by UN-Women articulating clearly the key findings and the way forward under the four MTR questions?

3) Do you have any specific suggestions and/or requests for the future (virtual) informal sessions associated with UN Women’s Strategic Plan?