



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

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### Evaluation

## Report on the policy advocacy work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2022

### *Summary*

This report summarizes the corporate evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women's (UN-Women) policy advocacy work.

The purpose of this evaluation was fourfold: 1) to develop an understanding and definition of UN-Women's policy advocacy work and a theory of change that underpins the strategies and interventions of the Entity's policy advocacy work; 2) to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of UN-Women's role in policy change and as a policy advocacy organization; 3) to identify examples of UN-Women's policy advocacy efforts that work and understand why; and 4) to develop lessons learned and recommendations that could strengthen UN-Women's policy advocacy work.

Findings from this evaluation are expected to contribute to strategic decision-making, organizational learning and accountability, and implementation of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025. The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN-Women Executive Board, senior management and programme personnel directly working on, or with interest in, policy advocacy. The evaluation is also intended to be useful for other actors working on policy advocacy, including national Governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, and development partners.

## I. Background

1. The corporate evaluation of UN-Women’s policy advocacy work was conducted by UN-Women’s Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) as part of the revised UN-Women Corporate Evaluation Plan (2018–2021). This corporate evaluation covered the period from 2018 to 2021. It was initiated in May 2021 and completed in February 2022.

2. The evaluation focused on UN-Women's policy advocacy roles, initiatives and interventions and the organizational, operational and strategic structures and approaches UN-Women has put in place to support policy advocacy. The evaluation examined the linkages at the global, regional and country levels to understand how policy advocacy work translates into changes in the everyday lives of women and girls. The evaluation focused on four key questions:

- To what extent is UN-Women’s policy advocacy work effective at contributing to policy change and relevant to country needs and global priorities?
- To what extent does UN-Women have the necessary organizational, strategic and operational approaches and the capacity in place to efficiently and coherently perform its policy advocacy roles?
- To what extent is UN-Women effective at translating normative policy advocacy successes at the global level into regional and country-level action?
- How are human rights, gender equality and inclusion incorporated into UN-Women’s policy advocacy work?

3. Findings from this evaluation are expected to contribute to strategic decision-making, organizational learning and accountability, and implementation of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

## II. Evaluation approach and methodology

4. The evaluation approach was participatory and included a combination of theory-based approach, appreciative inquiry and most significant change methodologies. The evaluation also incorporated the principles of gender-responsive evaluation and “leave no one behind”. Additionally, the evaluation team carried out 11 in-depth case studies and 25 country portfolio analyses, yielding rich data and valuable lessons.

5. A combination of primary and secondary data sources was used to gather evidence to answer the evaluation questions. In alignment with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidance *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*, a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted, which identified a range of internal and external stakeholders directly involved, or with an interest in, UN-Women’s policy advocacy work. In total, 262 internal and external stakeholders were engaged through semi-structured virtual interviews, focus group discussions, external stakeholder

surveys and internal staff surveys. All interviews were conducted in accordance with the recommendations for remote data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### III. Evaluation context

6. Recent years marked several key moments in terms of progress towards gender equality, including the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), five years of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the twentieth anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and UN-Women's tenth anniversary. As part of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the BPfA, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) adopted a political declaration in which Governments welcomed the progress made, but also recognized that no country had fully achieved gender equality for all women and girls. In adopting this political declaration, Member States acknowledged the importance of policy change in achieving gender equality and, among other pledges, agreed to *“take further concrete action to ensure the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including by: Eliminating all discriminatory laws and ensuring that laws, policies and programmes benefit all women and girls and that they are fully and effectively implemented and systematically evaluated to ensure their effectiveness and that they do not create and reinforce inequalities and marginalization.”*<sup>1</sup>

7. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the world has encountered socioeconomic challenges that have had a profound impact on the progress of gender equality. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to deepen pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems that threaten the gender equality gains made over the past few decades. In response, the UN Secretary-General released a policy brief which urged Governments to put women and girls at the centre of their recovery efforts to ensure that their policy responses to the pandemic maximized impact.<sup>2</sup>

8. The evaluation also considered the significant opportunities for strengthened system-wide coordination resulting from the UN system reform initiated in 2018. The 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), which established key UN system-wide strategic policy orientations and operational modalities for developing cooperation and country-level modalities of the UN development system, called upon UN entities to *“continue to provide evidence-based and integrated policy advice and programmatic support to help countries in the implementation of, follow-up to and reporting on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly by mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into national plans, including by promoting sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection, and ending poverty in all its forms*

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<sup>1</sup> UN-Women, [Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, paragraph 12](#) (New York, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women](#) (2020).

*and dimensions.*”<sup>3</sup> UN Women’s policy advocacy work explicitly responded to this call by leveraging the Entity’s expertise in supporting Governments with the implementation and monitoring of activities related to SDG 5 on gender equality.

## IV. Key conclusions

**Conclusion 1: UN-Women’s integrated mandate enables the Entity to have a strong policy advocacy role in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. However, there is an opportunity for UN-Women to define policy advocacy and use the Strategic Plan to develop a coherent approach for planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of policy advocacy.**

9. UN-Women’s policy advocacy work is rooted in several global normative frameworks and the Entity’s Strategic Plan. The Entity has contributed to shaping and promoting government policies and legislation that address gender equality and women’s empowerment. UN-Women’s triple mandate also extends policy advocacy work in multiple directions, such as when coordinating and influencing policy change and actions within the UN system and across its network of external partners, and through its regional and country offices that influence policy change.

10. UN-Women’s leadership and contributions to policy advocacy work are embedded throughout most of its programmatic work. The Entity has multiple pathways to policy advocacy and employs several strategies to advocate for policy change at the various levels in which it operates.

11. One of UN-Women’s key strategies for effective policy advocacy is convening. UN-Women provides a platform for Governments and local women’s organizations to engage in discourse. Another effective policy advocacy strategy is to support intergovernmental processes that facilitate the mainstreaming of gender equality and women’s empowerment principles and priorities into global norms and standards.

12. Despite these actions, there is no standard definition or shared understanding guiding what policy advocacy is within UN-Women. The absence of a high-level theory of change and an overall cohesive approach to policy advocacy work has impacted UN-Women’s ability to measure its contributions related to policy advocacy and report on its contribution to policy advocacy outcomes. The implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 through the development of thematic theories of change and signature interventions offers an opportunity to define policy advocacy and develop coherent policy advocacy approaches and reporting mechanisms.

**Conclusion 2: Evidence-based and credible knowledge is central to UN-Women’s policy advocacy work.**

13. UN-Women plays an active role as a technical expert on gender equality policy development and as a convenor of knowledge on gender equality and women’s empowerment in intergovernmental processes. Knowledge production and its dissemination are integral to UN-Women’s policy advocacy strategy.

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations General Assembly. [Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System \(A/RES/75/233\)](#), paragraph 24 (2020).

Knowledge products and research are produced at the headquarters, regional and country levels.

14. While at the global level, UN-Women produces high-quality authoritative knowledge products and reports, the data, evidence and knowledge produced at the country level did not always benefit from the same rigorous peer reviews and methodological consistency. Strategic dissemination of UN-Women's knowledge products in support of policy advocacy was not always clearly planned when knowledge products were prepared. Furthermore, effective knowledge management systems for exchanging lessons, model policies and tools need to be improved across all levels.

15. Localization of knowledge and context-specific evidence are fundamental to supporting policy advocacy at the regional and country levels. UN-Women draws upon global knowledge and data and contextualizes them at the regional and country levels, leveraging its partnerships and networks for further policy development and implementation. Although UN-Women's knowledge platforms have proven to be important depositories of information and data, due to funding uncertainty their governance and business continuity need to be reviewed and strengthened.

16. In general, knowledge platforms have fostered thematic knowledge generation and sharing that have contributed to evidence-led advocacy. However, it has been difficult to measure how UN-Women's knowledge platforms directly contribute to the effectiveness of policy advocacy efforts due to the lack of a theory of change and standardized approaches to results monitoring.

**Conclusion 3: Partnerships, a strength of UN-Women, are critical to ensuring a multiplier effect, leveraging resources and approaching policy advocacy work holistically.**

17. The evaluation found that UN-Women often acts as a bridge-builder among stakeholders by providing a platform for discussions between Governments and local women's organizations. UN-Women's partnerships with other agencies have contributed to setting a strong agenda in intergovernmental processes across all regions on themes such as peace and security, unpaid care work and the measurement of femicide. However, at times, partners working in silos on different outcome/thematic areas impeded a comprehensive approach to policy advocacy efforts by competing for the same resources, time with decision makers and support from CSOs.

18. UN-Women has been a valuable partner in policy advocacy initiatives. Partnering with national Governments ensures ownership and sustainability of policy advocacy initiatives and increases the uptake of UN-Women's knowledge products and platforms. Similarly, partnering with national Governments – particularly their national mechanisms for gender equality – on global normative frameworks helps facilitate the adoption of intergovernmental outcomes and the strengthening of relationships with regional women's advocacy organizations.

19. CSOs play a key role in UN-Women's policy advocacy work, particularly in community-based policy and sustainability of the policy process and beyond. Grass-roots partners/organizations, such as sports organizations, faith-based organizations and local women's networks, have been vital in enabling UN-

Women to reach marginalized groups and to change attitudes/behaviours through programming. While these partnerships have been fruitful, at times UN-Women's generally siloed efforts have hindered a holistic and coordinated approach to working on thematic areas of policy advocacy at the country level. There is also potential to better leverage and learn from the experiences and skills of grass-roots organizations working with marginalized groups.

**Conclusions 4: There is a need to clarify the organizational architecture for policy advocacy to form better coordination and communication linkages between headquarters and the regional and country offices.**

20. UN-Women's structure and organizational presence at the regional and country levels provides great opportunity for coordination, support and information-sharing but can also lead to fragmented policy advocacy work.

21. The absence of a shared understanding and overarching approach to policy advocacy work has contributed to a lack of horizontal coherence and linkages among different units on policy advocacy both within headquarters and across different levels. For example, communications for policy advocacy were fragmented, with limited coordination between headquarters and field offices. Clear linkages between UN-Women's communications and advocacy work were not always made and opportunities were lost as key advocacy messages were not always amplified through corporate communications products. There were also opportunities to bring communications into policy advocacy initiatives in a more coordinated and timely manner.

22. In the regional and country offices, regional programme managers and other personnel undertook varying levels of policy advocacy, despite it being outside the scope of their jobs. Stakeholders identified the need for more guidance, such as best practices; tools; model legislation; and data, evidence and knowledge that headquarters is well placed to develop, compile and curate. Stakeholders noted that regional offices were also in a strong position to provide greater context analysis to support country offices, while also highlighting the important role of country offices in providing lessons and guidance of their own, especially for the contextualization and implementation of policy work in their countries.

23. Overall, greater clarity in the roles and responsibilities for policy advocacy across the organization could facilitate stronger engagement and coordination between headquarters and regional and country offices.

**Conclusion 5: UN-Women's monitoring and results tracking systems do not adequately capture policy advocacy results and lessons learned.**

24. Measuring the effectiveness of key results due to UN-Women's policy advocacy work was difficult given the long-term nature of most change. While the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 included many indicators related to different aspects of policy advocacy, the indicators were not consistent across thematic areas, were presented at a high level and provided mostly quantitative output data on policy change. UN-Women could enhance its monitoring and evaluation of policy advocacy to better understand how the Entity contributes to change and to what extent (i.e. not just stating that the change occurred). There is also an opportunity to evaluate the longer-term outcomes and impact of policy changes on the lives of women and girls. To do so, UN-Women could utilize innovative methodologies for evaluating policy advocacy, such as the

bellwether methodology,<sup>4</sup> and conduct periodic evaluations of specific policy advocacy initiatives to complement development results framework data. In addition, the introduction of cross-cutting outcome areas under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 provides an opportunity for more consistent reporting on policy advocacy results across thematic areas, particularly under the first cross-cutting outcome, “global normative frameworks, and gender-responsive laws, policies and institutions.”

**Conclusion 6: Current resources are not always adequate to carry out policy advocacy work to the Entity’s full potential, and there are capacity gaps in the availability of necessary personnel and expertise.**

25. In addition to understanding global norms and standards, UN-Women personnel also require expertise and knowledge of context-specific gender issues, and must have the political and social acumen to effectively carry out policy advocacy work. Regional and country offices undertook policy advocacy work by including policy advocacy in a variety of funding proposals, programme documents and strategic notes. The offices reported that funding often depended on the flexibility and willingness of donors to support policy advocacy initiatives and many programmes lacked the necessary resources for policy advocacy work. Due to UN-Women’s limited capacity, programme managers often took on additional roles such as resource mobilization, coordination and monitoring, and had to navigate local social and political dynamics to identify policy advocacy opportunities.

26. The evaluation noted that most policy-related personnel were based at headquarters and relatively few thematic experts were located at the regional and country levels. In the field, country office representatives played a key role in policy advocacy with their host national Governments and within UN country teams, in addition to overseeing their regular work. This imbalance in expertise was often attributed to the lack of core funding available to support thematic policy expertise in field offices. Current resources are not always adequate to carry out policy advocacy work to the Entity’s full potential.

**Conclusion 7: UN-Women’s policy advocacy work contributes to shaping and promoting government policies and legislation to address gender equality and empowering women. However, it does not always clearly lead to longer-term outcomes for women and girls for a variety of reasons, such as capacity, funding and internal coherence as well as external factors that are beyond UN-Women’s direct control.**

27. UN-Women’s work on normative frameworks, laws and policies builds capacity at the country level and enables sustainability. Nevertheless, the evaluation concluded that there are opportunities for UN-Women to increase its effectiveness by consistently and systematically utilizing its normative, coordination and operational work to support national partners in implementing laws and policies.

28. Global normative frameworks have been instrumental in advancing policy work at the national level. Intergovernmental normative frameworks have created the conditions for progress to be made on policy advocacy initiatives, as was noted in the evaluation case studies in Jordan, Viet Nam, Burundi and

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<sup>4</sup> Julia Coffman and Ehren Reed, *Unique Methods in Advocacy Evaluation* (Harvard Family Research Project, Innovation Network, n.d.).

Mali. Nonetheless, while UN-Women’s coordination and convening work has contributed to improved policy and normative frameworks at the country level, this has not always translated into positive changes in the everyday lives of women and girls. The evaluation concluded that a stronger evidence base, strategic multi-stakeholder partnerships and more linkages across sectors would help UN-Women improve coherence, consistency and coordination between its normative and operational efforts to deliver policy results for women and girls.

29. The annual session of CSW has been central to UN-Women’s policy advocacy work. However, UN-Women lacks a strategy on the actions that regional and country offices can take to systematically integrate the agreed conclusions into their respective work areas.

**Conclusion 8: UN-Women is seen as an advocate for “leave no one behind”, but translating this principle into practice continues to be a challenge. The process of implementing “leave no one behind” is often uneven and not systematically planned or monitored.**

30. Consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN-Women has a strong commitment to leaving no one behind and to promoting an understanding of women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including on the basis of age, sex, race, ethnicity, location, disability, migration, displacement, indigenous, socioeconomic and other statuses. While UN-Women aims to reach women and girls in vulnerable situations through most of its policy advocacy efforts, there is scope for improvement in identifying the women and girls left furthest behind when implementing policy advocacy initiatives.

31. UN-Women has played a leading role in inter-agency forums, ensuring gender equality and intersectional approaches are included. For instance, 67 UN-Women offices supported initiatives to empower women and girls with disabilities and UN-Women facilitated access to HIV services for women living with HIV in 35 countries.

32. Nevertheless, in practice, policy advocacy initiatives do not systematically identify and include women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Developing and implementing inclusion strategies within policy advocacy activities and interventions, and monitoring/reporting through disaggregated data or gender-responsive or intersectional analysis, are uneven across policy advocacy efforts.

33. Although UN-Women has made considerable progress in making inequality visible through data, more work is required to translate the data into policy advocacy efforts. Of note is the Women Count programme which has introduced tools related to “leave no one behind” and gender-responsive data collection (e.g. the Counted and Visible Toolkit).

## V. Key recommendations

**Recommendation 1: Leverage the Strategic Plan to enable coherent planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of policy advocacy priorities.**

34. UN-Women should develop a clear definition of policy advocacy that includes a high-level theory of change and monitoring mechanisms for policy



advocacy work. Additionally, it is recommended that UN-Women establish global policy advocacy priorities through the operationalization of the Strategic Plan and utilize cross-cutting Outcome 1 of the Strategic Plan on gender-responsive normative frameworks and institutions to build cohesive policy advocacy approaches, monitoring and reporting. It is recommended that UN-Women develop policy advocacy strategies and measurement mechanisms by developing thematic theories of action and signature interventions. UN-Women should contextualize its policy advocacy priorities for regional and country offices through strategic notes and workplans. Policy advocacy priorities should align with communications, knowledge, and data and evidence production.

**Recommendation 2: Clarify and strengthen the Entity’s policy advocacy architecture, including by strengthening the integration of policy advocacy across the organization and ensuring the meaningful participation of all divisions working directly or indirectly on policy advocacy.**

35. It is recommended that UN-Women map and clarify the key actors and roles of different divisions and regional and country offices involved in policy advocacy. UN-Women should strengthen synergies between divisions through joint planning and matrix management and should strengthen networked management of regional offices (policy regional advisers) as the link between headquarters and country offices. UN-Women should strengthen linkages between its communication and advocacy efforts at all levels of the Entity so that communication products and messages directly support policy advocacy. Additionally, it is recommended that headquarters/regional and country offices develop annual strategic communications plans and key messages to improve focus, consistency and efficiency.

**Recommendation 3: Strengthen data, knowledge generation and knowledge management systems as enablers for policy advocacy work and establish UN-Women as a recognized knowledge broker on gender equality in the policy advocacy sphere.**

36. UN-Women should develop effective data and knowledge generation systems based on its policy advocacy priorities and evidence from gap analysis on policy development. It is recommended that UN-Women identify which data and knowledge UN-Women will produce itself and jointly with partners. UN-Women should invest in strengthening knowledge management systems for policy advocacy priorities to support the work of its personnel. Policy guidance, key messages and training/capacity-building tools in support of policy advocacy should be effectively disseminated across the organization. UN-Women should also establish a corporate communication plan to systematically disseminate knowledge products to regional and country offices and partners.

**Recommendation 4: Continue to strengthen relationships with national Governments, UN agencies, feminist movements and women’s organizations to support policy change and implementation.**

37. UN-Women should prioritize and leverage its various partnerships to obtain the greatest impact appropriate to each context. UN-Women should collaborate with national Governments to increase buy-in and ownership of policy change and implementation. Additionally, it is recommended that UN-Women leverage partnerships with feminist movements and women’s organizations at the global, regional and country levels to support policy change and implementation. UN-Women should also leverage UN reform, the Resident

Coordinator's Office and partnerships with other UN agencies to enhance coordination, scale policy advocacy work and foster support for implementation. The evaluation recommends that UN-Women leverage partnerships with academia, research institutions and think tanks for research-based knowledge generation and sharing.

**Recommendation 5: Strategically place policy advocacy specialists across the organization and ensure that regional and country offices have the appropriate level of social and political acumen and adequate capacity in terms of the number of personnel with technical expertise and knowledge of local context on gender issues.**

38. UN-Women should strategically locate thought leaders and policy experts throughout the organization, including at the regional and country levels, to better support policy advocacy priorities. The evaluation also recommends that UN-Women i) recruit world-class talent on gender policy to bolster UN-Women's role as a "thought leader" and ii) develop capacity and expertise for policy advocacy work in field offices. UN-Women should provide policy advocacy training to country and regional representatives and programme managers. Furthermore, it is recommended that UN-Women review country office job descriptions and titles to ensure that they adequately reflect policy advocacy work, in order to support the recruitment of personnel with the required policy experience.

**Recommendation 6: Strengthen and improve mechanisms and processes within UN-Women by developing guidance tools and best practices to effectively engage groups that are being left behind through policy advocacy work.**

39. UN-Women should identify or develop approaches for integrating the "leave no one behind" principle into policy advocacy work, including approaches for integrating the needs of "leave no one behind" within legislation and policies; identify when and how to share policy advocacy products with those at risk of being left behind; and monitor and evaluate "leave no one behind" in policy advocacy work. It is recommended that UN-Women develop minimum standards for integrating "leave no one behind" into policy advocacy that balance best practices and expectations with resource and time constraints. UN-Women should also leverage its many partnerships with grass-roots organizations, women's organizations and networks to identify and ensure sustained reach to groups that are being left behind, particularly to support the implementation of legislation, policies and standards.

## ANNEX 1

### Evaluation findings and key questions

**Key question 1. To what extent is UN-Women’s policy advocacy work effective at contributing to policy change and relevant to country needs and global priorities?**

**Finding 1.** UN-Women is viewed as a successful policy advocacy organization and is uniquely positioned to carry out policy advocacy work due to its integrated mandate. While UN-Women’s policy advocacy work has been effective in contributing to policy change, in many instances less is known about how UN-Women’s efforts contribute to the Entity’s overall impact and outcomes. This is in part due to a lack of operationalized definitions and coherent approaches to policy advocacy, and the inherent challenges of measuring policy change.

**Finding 2.** UN-Women’s policy advocacy strategies such as convening; production and use of research and knowledge products; partnerships; capacity-building and technical assistance; and technical inputs in intergovernmental processes have advanced gender equality and women’s empowerment priorities.

**Finding 3.** Evidence-based knowledge products are seen as key drivers of successful policy advocacy. Knowledge products are integral to UN-Women’s policy advocacy work and, in some cases, have contributed to establishing the Entity as a thought leader in women’s human rights-based perspectives.

**Finding 4.** There are several examples and indicative evidence of UN-Women’s knowledge platforms being used effectively to enhance UN-Women’s policy advocacy work. However, UN-Women could improve its approach to implementing and measuring how knowledge platforms contribute to achieving policy advocacy results.

**Finding 5.** UN-Women’s ability to create and maintain partnerships and relationships is considered a critical factor and a comparative advantage in its policy advocacy work. Successful policy advocacy initiatives have involved strong and strategic partnerships with Government, CSOs and other UN agencies.

**Finding 6.** UN-Women’s policy advocacy work supported and created environments that amplified the voice of women’s organizations advocating for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

**Key question 2. To what extent does UN-Women have the necessary organizational, strategic and operational approaches and the capacity in place to efficiently and coherently perform its policy advocacy roles?**

**Finding 7.** Policy advocacy is anchored in strategic notes and annual workplans at the country level. However, due to a lack of resources and the long-term nature of policy advocacy, some offices have had to forgo cohesiveness in favour of opportunistic approaches that pursue policy advocacy. Policy advocacy implementation could be strengthened by anchoring activities within longer-term programming.

**Finding 8.** There is a need to clarify UN-Women’s policy advocacy architecture and to strengthen policy advocacy workflows among headquarters and the regional and country offices.

**Finding 9.** UN-Women tracks policy advocacy efforts through the Strategic Plan results framework. However, the complexity of policy advocacy makes it difficult to assess how policy successes happen and how they contribute to long-term changes for women and girls.

**Finding 10.** Current human and financial resources dedicated to policy advocacy are limited and unevenly spread across field offices. To carry out policy advocacy work effectively, resources must combine substantive knowledge, technical expertise, effective communications, coordination, an understanding of political dynamics, and partners.

**Finding 11.** There is scope to strengthen UN-Women’s strategic use of communications in its policy advocacy work.

**Key question 3. To what extent is UN-Women effective at translating normative policy advocacy successes at the global level into regional and country-level action?**

**Finding 12.** There is evidence of a strong link between global normative frameworks for gender equality and women’s empowerment and regional and country-level policy advocacy work. However, new policies and laws arising from policy advocacy efforts do not always clearly translate into concrete results in the everyday lives of women and girls for a variety of reasons, many of which are beyond the direct control of UN-Women.

**Finding 13.** CSW is instrumental in shaping global standards on gender equality and women’s empowerment, but there is a need for systematic processes to follow up on the agreed conclusions with regional and country offices to support implementation.

**Key question 4. How are human rights, gender equality and inclusion incorporated into UN-Women’s policy advocacy work?**

**Finding 14.** “Leave no one behind” is a core principle of UN-Women and its personnel are aware of its importance, but translating the principle into practice is a challenge. While UN-Women strives to include marginalized groups in its policy advocacy initiatives, the process is often unsystematically planned and monitored.

**Finding 15.** Data, evidence and knowledge are necessary components for identifying marginalized groups and for understanding their needs when conducting policy advocacy work.