

ISSUE BRIEF

FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

Assessment of the implementation of a
minimum 15 per cent financial target



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ACRONYMS

CBPF: Country-Based Pooled Fund
CEB: the UN system Chief Executives Board
CERF: Central Emergency Relief Fund
CRSV-MPTF: The Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Prevention Multi-Partner Trust Fund
DCO: Development Coordination Office
DPPA: Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
EC: Secretary-General's Executive Committee
ECOSOC: The Economic and Social Council
FAO: Food and Agricultural Organization
FBN: Finance and Budget Network
FMOG: the Fiduciary Management Oversight Group
GEM: Gender Equality Marker
GEWE: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
HLTF: Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force
HQ: Headquarters
IATI: The International Aid Transparency Initiative
IFI: International Financial Institution
IOM: International Organization for Migration
LDC: Least Developed Countries
JP: Joint Programme
MINUSMA: The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO: The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MPTF: Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MPTFO: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
OECD: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RRA: Risk Resilience Assessment
SDG: Sustainable Development Goal
STFA: Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan
PBF: The UN Peacebuilding Fund
QCPR: The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
UN: United Nations
UNCT: United Nations Country Team
UNCT-SWAP: The United Nations Country Team - SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard
UNDG: United Nations Development Group
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA: The United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF: The United Nations Children's Fund
UNIMIK: United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNISFA: United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNSDG: United Nations Sustainable Development Group
UN-SWAP: the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN-Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WPHF: Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund
WPS: Women, Peace and Security

I. BACKGROUND

In 2019, the Secretary-General put forward a set of directives for the UN system on women, peace and security (WPS), including commitments on financing. Financing for women, peace and security was also included as one of the Secretary-General's forward-looking goals on women, peace and security (Box 1). Progress on the implementation of these commitments is reviewed on an annual basis by the Secretary-General's Executive Committee (EC) under its agenda item on WPS. At the 2021 review, the EC tasked UN Women to provide an updated assessment of implementation related to the UN system's commitment of a 15 per cent financial resource earmark and amplify efforts to raise awareness of this specific commitment as well as share updated figures during the annual EC WPS item for more consistent tracking (Decision 2021/49). The Secretary-General emphasized the UN's commitment, in which he obligated the full compliance of all UN entities and country teams, "to reach the target of allocating a minimum of 15 per cent of programmatic budgets to gender equality and to improve the mainstreaming of gender in all areas of expenditure." This brief responds to that request, provides an assessment of the status of implementation, and puts forward a set of recommendations to accelerate the pace of progress.

Box 1. Financing for gender equality – A call for benchmarks and mainstreaming

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S 2019 DIRECTIVES ON WPS (S/2019/800, paragraph 120 g)

"United Nations country teams will set benchmarks to reach the target to allocate a minimum of 15 per cent of programmatic budgets to gender equality and the empowerment of women and improve the mainstreaming of gender in all areas of expenditure. In line with the recommendations of the high-level task force on financing for gender equality, by 2020, targets and financial allocations on gender equality must increase and an accountability mechanism be established to track allocations;"

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S FORWARD-LOOKING GOALS ON WPS (S/2020/946, paragraph 113 d)

"Galvanize the donor community's support for universal compliance with the target of allocating a minimum of 15 per cent of official development assistance to conflict-affected countries to advancing gender equality, and the remaining 85 per cent to integrating gender considerations, including multiplying by five direct assistance to women's organizations, currently at 0.2 per cent. This entails not only seeking an increase in allocations, but also earmarking and tracking resources to support women and peace and security, following the good example set by some donors and United Nations entities, such as the Peacebuilding Fund. **I expect all relevant United Nations entities and country teams to comply with the recommendations of the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality to set benchmarks to reach the target of allocating a minimum of 15 per cent of programmatic budgets to gender equality and to improve the mainstreaming of gender in all areas of expenditure, as instructed in my 2019 report. Implementation of this directive will be tracked yearly and discussed with my Executive Committee;**"

Over the past decade, attention to gender markers and financial benchmarks as key tools to better track and assess resource allocations to gender equality has grown. Annex A provides an overview of UN system commitments and targets on financing for gender equality. A well-cited example is that of the Peacebuilding Fund and steps taken to realize the minimum 15 per cent target included in the Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding. While seemingly a modest target, UN actors have struggled to establish baselines and systems for financial tracking, let alone reach or exceed the 15 per cent target. Yet, having a benchmark has been an important tool to advance financing for gender equality and gender-responsive programming across the system.

A similar benchmark was included in the Women, Peace & Security and Humanitarian Action Compact and some donors have adopted financing targets for their official development assistance¹. For instance, as part of their Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada committed that no less than 95 percent of Canada's bilateral international development assistance initiatives will target or integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This includes 15 per cent of investments specifically targeting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, with the remaining 80 percent integrating these goals across all international assistance efforts.

As part of the UN reform processes, the Organization has committed to strengthen the pool of resources for gender equality and to improve financial allocation tracking. Recent efforts to harmonize approaches to strengthen the resource allocation for gender equality have yielded some good results. However, there is still a long way to go before requirements and approaches are systematized across the UN system. Follow-up to the Secretary-General's report 'Our Common Agenda,' as well as the recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Task Force on Financing Gender Equality offers an opportunity to deepen and standardize the implementation of financing commitments to ensure that the Organization is 'fit for purpose' to deliver on gender equality as a core priority (Box 2).

Box 2. Secretary-General's High-Level Task Forces on Financing for Gender Equality: Follow-up to recommendations

The Secretary-General's High-level Task Force (HLTF) on Financing for Gender Equality, established in 2018, completed its review of United Nations budgets and expenditure in 2019. The Task Force presented a set of [recommendations](#) centered around the human and financial investment needed for the Organization to deliver on its gender equality commitments. In the recommendations, the task force emphasized the importance of establishing and resourcing gender equality priorities in strategic plans, establishing baselines, targets and financial benchmarks to ensure a robust gender architecture, ensuring systematic financial tracking and reporting across the United Nations system and identifying ways to increase the overall resource envelope for financing for gender equality.

In 2021, the Executive Committee approved an [Implementation Plan](#) to complement the HLTF recommendations endorsed in 2019. The Plan addresses the strengthening of gender mainstreaming in pooled funds, the integration of gender equality in strategic plans and budgetary frameworks, the harmonization of system-wide reporting on finances for gender equality in the UN system and the implementation of the gender equality marker at the entity-level and in UNCTs funding frameworks

The Plan is being implemented through existing inter-agency spaces that are already working on system-wide agendas, such as the UNSDG Fiduciary Management and Oversight Group and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination Finance and Budget Network. Entities can request help-desk support from a Technical Support Team within the UN System Coordination Division at UN-Women, with the office of the Secretariat Controller playing a central role in the roll-out of the Plan and the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office concerning interagency pooled funding mechanisms.

¹Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls - Guidance for development partners (OECD, 2022)

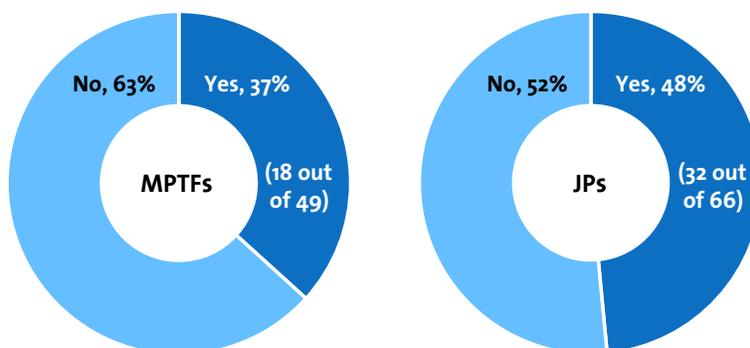
II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 15 PER CENT FINANCIAL TARGET

A. Pooled funds

The main inter-agency pooled mechanisms used by the UN system are UN Multi-Partner Trust Funds (MPTFs) and stand-alone Joint Programmes (JPs). Since 2004, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) has managed over \$16 billion in funding over 200 trust funds. Of those, over 100 hundred are currently active, including global, regional and country level pooled funds. The MPTF Office-administered funds currently support operations in over 120 countries with a portfolio involving more than 160 contributors and over 100 participating organisations. An important part of resources goes towards the support of initiatives in conflict and crisis-affected settings and 70% of resources are directly invested in countries categorized as LDCs. In 2021, the largest global and regional Funds were the Peacebuilding Fund, the Central Africa Forest Initiative and Spotlight. The largest country pooled funds in terms of capitalization were the humanitarian funds in Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, DRC and South Sudan, and peace and transition funds in Afghanistan, Somalia and Papua New Guinea. Data on UN administered pooled funding mechanisms is available on the MPTFO gateway (<https://mptf.undp.org/>).

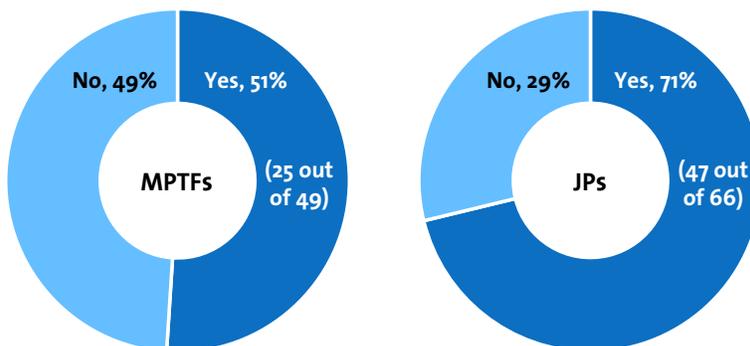
In 2021, only 18 MPTFs (37 per cent) and 32 JPs (48 per cent) reported having financial targets on gender equality (Figure 1)². In terms of financial allocations, 25 MPTFs (51 per cent) and 47 JPs (71 per cent) reported allocations of 15 per cent or more of their resources to programmes with gender equality as a principal objective (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Proportion of MPTFs or JPs that set financial targets on gender equality, 2021



SOURCE: Survey by UNSDG FMOG Working Group conducted between December 2021 and January 2022.

Figure 2. Proportion of MPTFs or JPs that allocated 15% or more of their resources to programmes with gender equality as a principal objective, 2021



SOURCE: Survey by UNSDG FMOG Working Group conducted between December 2021 and January 2022.

The MPTFO, together with the UN system and donors, is working to **expand the gender equality marker** to all funds. About two third of the pooled funds that responded to Fiduciary Management Oversight Group's (FMOG) recent survey have applied the gender equality marker for 'quality at entry'. Harmonization in the implementation of the four-point scale gender equality marker has been strengthened across pooled funds.

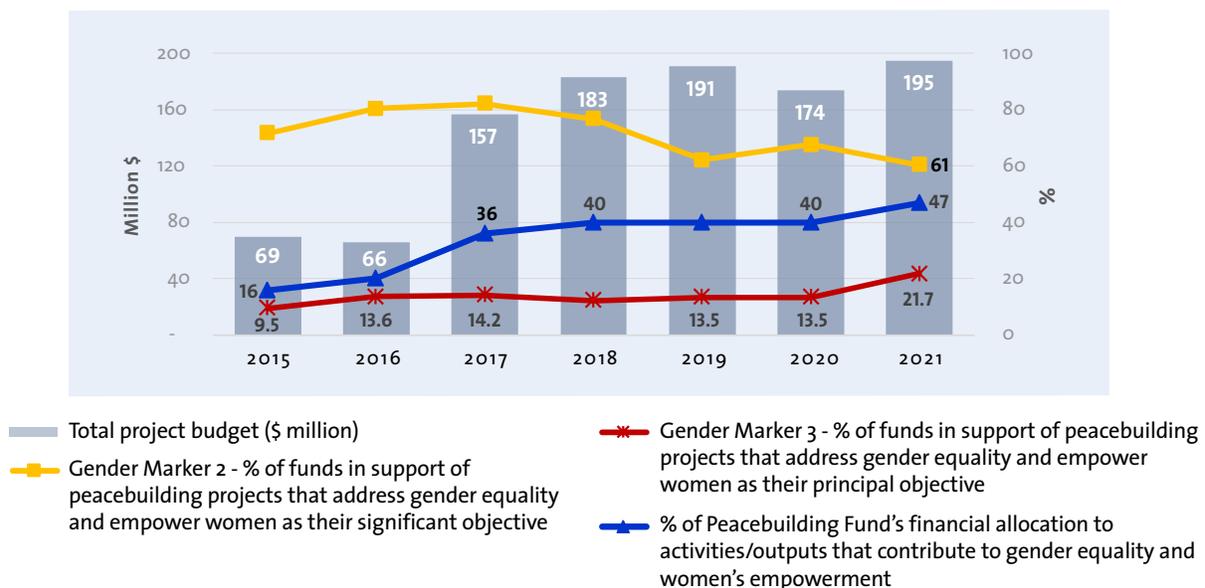
² A recent survey by UNSDG FMOG Working Group on Pooled Funds to all MPTFs' Administrative Agents was responded by a total of 115 UN interagency pooled funds, equivalent to 70% of the estimated 164 active UN inter-agency pooled funds during the period 2020-2021.

The example of the **UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund** shows the difference that prioritizing gender equality, applying a gender equality marker, and setting a financial target can make. In its second call for proposals, the Fund set a target of at least 30 per cent of its investments in programmes coded as gender equality marker (GEM) 3, where gender equality is a principal objective. As a result, financial allocations jumped from 5 per cent of total funding (USD 1.9 million) in the first call to 64 per cent (USD 11.9 million) in the second.

Following strong advocacy from Afghan women leaders and gender equality advocates, the newly established **Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA)** is building on established good practice on gender-responsive financing. The STFA requires that all agencies are committed to allocate a minimum of 15 per cent of their budgets dedicated to gender equality. Since its inception in 2021 and up to April 2022, the STFA had allocated over 50 per cent of its funding to projects with gender equality as a principal or significant objective.

The **UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)** provides an example for other pooled funds seeking to apply a gender marker (Box 3). In 2010, the Secretary-General committed the UN system to allocate at least 15 per cent of UN managed funds in support of peacebuilding to projects whose principal objective, consistent with organizational mandates, is to address women’s specific needs, advance gender equality of empower women³. To meet this target, the PBF has actively encouraged funded partners to develop projects specifically dedicated to gender equality and women’s empowerment. Since 2014, the PBF has developed a number of tools and processes aimed at tracking the Fund’s financial commitments that underpin gender-responsive programming. In 2017, the PBF raised its target for gender-sensitive peacebuilding to 30 per cent, a goal it has met or exceeded every year since. Most recently, and as an extension of this commitment, the Fund’s 2020–2024 Strategy established a priority window to promote the engagement of women and young people within peace and security agendas. In 2021, PBF allocated 47 per cent (\$92.3 million)⁴ of its total allocation to support gender equality and women’s empowerment. Specifically, 21.7 per cent of its funds were allocated to projects with the principal objective of advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment (i.e. gender marker 3) in the context of peacebuilding (Figure 3)⁵. The Fund’s Gender and Youth Initiative allocated \$51.5 million for 38 projects across 23 countries, 19 of which had a dedicated focus on gender equality, compared to \$36.6 million in 2020.

Figure 3. UN Peacebuilding Fund funds allocated to projects promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, 2015-2021



NOTE: The 47% financial allocation in 2021 (blue line with triangles) was tracked at the output or activity level, instead of the project level. The 47% is calculated as the sum of financial allocations to projects with gender equality as a principal objective [i.e. Gender Marker 3 (GM 3) projects] and the allocations within GM 2 and GM 1 projects that contribute to gender equality.

SOURCES: Secretary General’s Peacebuilding Dashboard retrieved in June 2022, Reports of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021), and UN DPPA Peacebuilding Support Office (data requested in July 2022).

³Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding (2010): http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven_point_action_plan.pdf

⁴The 47% is not the sum of GM3 and GM2. It is the sum of GM3 and the allocations within GM2 and GM1 projects that contribute to GEWE. The calculation used a different methodology that is not focused on the project level. Because of the budget template, PBSO is able to track financial allocation at the output/activity level.

⁵Also see [Secretary General’s Peacebuilding Funding Dashboard](#).

Box 3. The UN Peacebuilding Fund: Lessons Learned and Good Practice

Gender-responsive peacebuilding is key to the mission of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to prevent violent conflict and sustain peace by fostering international support for nationally owned and led peacebuilding efforts. The PBF provides inspiration for other pooled funding mechanisms in the process of implementing a gender marker. The scoring of the PBF's Gender Marker tool is determined by taking into consideration the extent to which gender and gender-responsiveness is integrated in the following: a) conflict analysis; b) implementation and activities; c) results framework; and d) budget⁶. The 2021 independent Thematic Review on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding found that, overall, the gender marker is well applied across PBF recipients, although some agencies still struggle to meet all the requirements set out in the Gender Marker Guidance Note.

The financial commitment to gender-responsive peacebuilding has contributed to transformative change on the ground. For example, a PBF-funded project implemented by FAO and IOM in Yemen was successful in strengthening the participation of women in conflict resolution mechanisms related to natural resource management (land and water) at the local community level, with a longer-term goal of enhanced social cohesion⁷. In South Sudan, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women implemented a PBF-funded project to increase access to life-saving integrated services through One Stop Centers/Family Protection Centers. The project helped strengthen the participation of women's organizations in local peace processes and increase civic engagement in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence (GBV). It also helped increase access to justice mechanisms for GBV survivors and address and transform harmful social norms. In addition, behavioural change has been observed in administration of justice by the traditional leaders. As opposed to making traditional rulings, they started referring GBV cases to the Justice and Confidence Centres, which is attributed to their acceptance that GBV is a crime that should be prosecuted in a court of law. The PBF has also acted as an incubator for innovative programming on gender and climate security.

PBF's success in advancing gender-responsive financing for peacebuilding is based on the following essential elements:

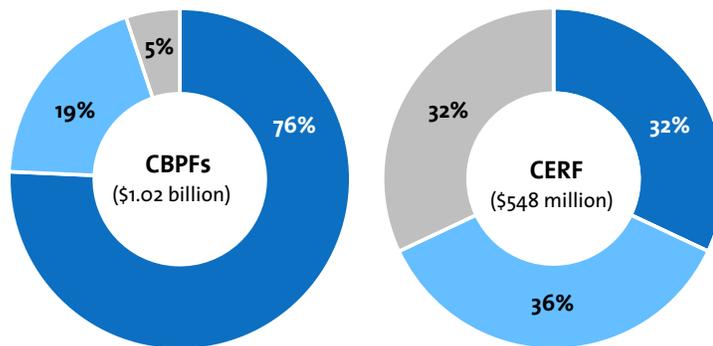
- Committed senior leadership that provided political will, strategic, focus and accountability
- Making the tracking of gender-focused allocations a requirement
- Having well-developed methodology and guidance to support PBF recipients in designing gender-responsive peacebuilding programmes and resources allocation;
- Dedicated gender expertise with UNFPA and UN Women seconding a gender adviser to the Peacebuilding Support Office
- Investment in gender and conflict analysis
- Staff capacity for monitoring and reporting and capacity development initiatives for PBF applicants and project managers

At present, there are no gender equality benchmarks in Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) or the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), so recent attention responds to prioritization by the senior leadership, rather than institutional mandates. In 2021, of the \$1.02 billion by the Country-based Pooled Funds to deliver humanitarian assistance in 2021, \$771 million (76 per cent) was allocated to projects likely to contribute to gender equality, including across age groups (Figure 4). Another 196 million (19 per cent) was provided to projects likely to contribute to gender equality, but without attention to age groups.

⁶ See [PBF Guidance Note on Gender Marker Scoring](#)

⁷ PBF/IRF-202: Strengthening the role of women in peace building through natural resources management at the community level in the rural areas of the governorates of Sana'a and Lahj in Yemen: <https://mptf.undp.org/project/001082o8>.

Figure 4. Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs), Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the shares of funding allocated to programmes/projects contributing to gender equality and/or the empowerment of women & girls in developing countries, 2021



- Gender with age marker (GAM) Code 4 (likely to contribute to gender equality, including across age groups)
 - GAM code 3 (likely to contribute to gender equality, but without attention to age groups)
 - GAM 2, 1, 0 (unlikely to contribute to gender equality)
- SOURCES: CBPFs (https://cbpf.data.unocha.org/#gam_heading) and CERF.

The number of pooled funds that are dedicated to the advancement of specific gender equality goals and commitments has increased. Of these, the Spotlight Initiative Fund, a joint initiative by the United Nations and the European Union focused on eliminating violence against women, currently has the largest operating budget. Other Funds, such as the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund, have grown and are delivering important results (Figure 5 and Box 4).

Figure 5. Selected Multi-Partner Trust Funds dedicated to the advancement of specific gender equality goals and commitments



NOTE: a.This amount does not include \$13 million contributed by Spotlight Initiative Fund. b.The CRSV-MPTF has succeeded the UN Action Multi-Partner Trust Fund, which operated from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2019.

SOURCE: UN MPTF Office Partners Gateway, accessed July 2022.

Box 4. Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)

Since its launch in 2016, WPHF has mobilized over \$100 million* and has supported over 600 local women’s civil society organizations in conflict-affected and humanitarian settings, almost half of which have received funding through the United Nations for the first time. The fund has reached close to 17 million people across 28 countries around the world and has proven its agility to respond to new and emerging crises⁸. With WPHF funding, women’s rights and youth focused organizations have played leadership roles in improving participation and decision making of women in conflict prevention, gender-responsive humanitarian and crisis planning, conflict resolution, protection of women and girls, and peacebuilding and recovery. Uniquely, the WPHF also provides critical institutional funding to women civil society organizations to safeguard their existence, strengthen their capacities, and adapt to the evolving challenges of conflict and humanitarian contexts. To date, 58 local women’s organizations across 18 countries have successfully sustained their organizations and retained their staff/volunteers as a result of core funding received to continue their critical work⁹. The Fund has also made special efforts to address specific funding needs and gaps. As of August 2022, in addition to its regular funding cycle, the Fund is operating three dedicated funding windows: The Rapid Response Window on Women’s Participation in Peace Processes and the Implementation of Peace Agreements, the WPHF COVID-19 Emergency Response Window, and the WPHF Funding Window for Women Human Rights Defenders.

*This includes \$13 million contributed by the Spotlight Initiative Fund.

⁸<https://wphfund.org/>

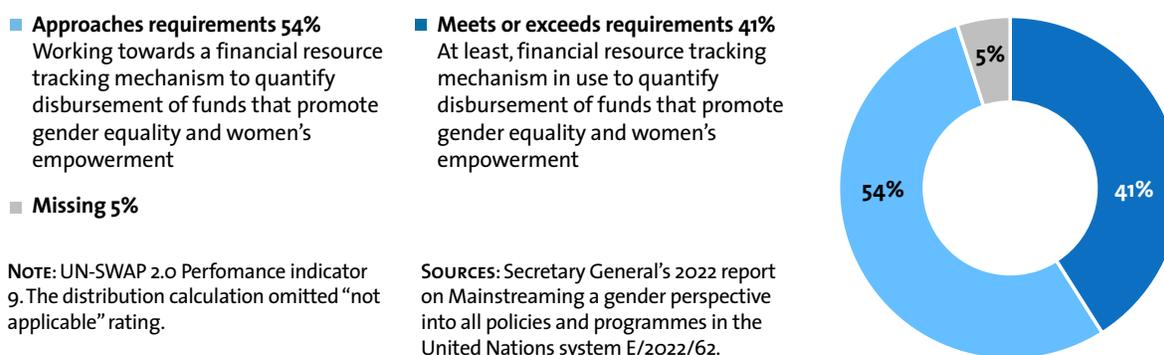
⁹As of 1 July 2022

B. Progress across UN entities

Across the United Nations system, **resource tracking and allocation for gender equality** has remained one of the weakest performing areas, with only a limited number of entities reporting that they “meet” or “exceed” the requirements for the two system-wide indicators¹⁰ tracked under the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). Latest reporting under the new UN-SWAP 2.0 show that in 2021 less than half of reporting entities (41 per cent) had systems to track resources for gender equality and women’s empowerment¹¹ (Figure 6). However, an increased number of entities are working towards the establishment of a financial resource tracking mechanism.

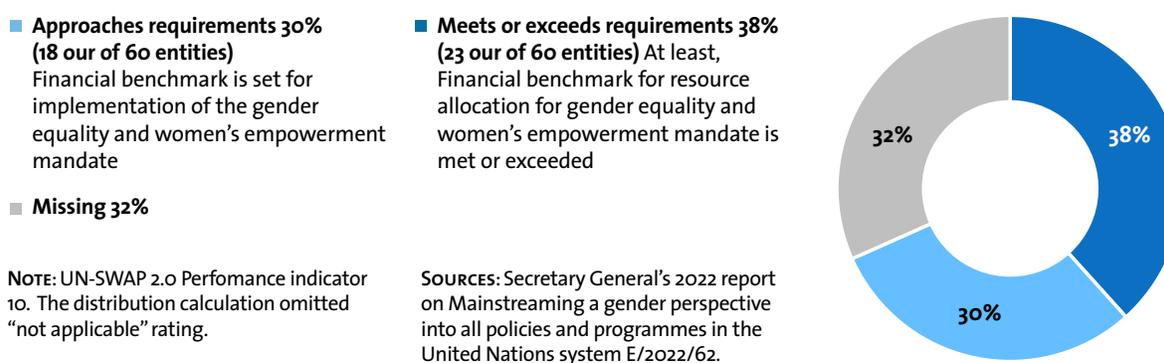
UN entities need to continue work towards the **harmonization of the gender equality marker** to ensure comparability across the UN system. While 64 per cent of entities with gender markers apply a 4-point-scale GEM (UNDG standard), there is a wide variety of scales (from 3 to 6-point-scales) in the gender markers applied by the remaining entities. This makes comparison and analysis of progress more challenging.

Figure 6. Distribution of UN entities by performance rating on financial resource tracking, 2021



Regarding entities that set **financial targets for resource allocation for gender equality**, there has been some progress, albeit slight. The percentage of entities meeting or exceeding their targets has risen from 31 per cent in 2018 to 38 per cent (23 out of 60 entities) in 2021¹² (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Distribution of UN entities by performance rating on financial resource allocation, 2021



¹⁰Performance indicator 9: financial resource tracking. Performance indicator 10: Financial resource allocation.

¹¹UN-SWAP 2.0 Performance indicator 9. 28 out of 68 reporting entities. See https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2022/62.

¹²UN-SWAP 2.0 Performance indicator 10. 22 out of 58 entities (omitting ‘non-applicable’ rating). See https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2022/62.

In 2021, 23 entities reported having met or exceeded their target allocation on gender equality, compared to 16 in 2018. UNICEF, for instance, allocated 16 per cent of its funding in conflict-affected countries to programmes with gender equality as a principal objective. At 8 per cent, UNDP remains below target for funding dedicated to gender equality, and programming in conflict-affected countries is lagging further behind (2.7 per cent). In recognition of the urgent need to increase investment and accountability, UNDP's Crisis Bureau has re-committed to the minimum 15 per cent target in crisis contexts and is taking measures to deliver on this.

There is no standard yet on the application of benchmarks. While some entities apply the minimum 15 per cent as a target, others have adopted other minimum targets. Moreover, there are differences in how benchmarks are applied. They are often not always applied to the total financial resources but rather limited to select areas or programmes supported by extrabudgetary resources.

In 2020, as part of implementing the Department's WPS Policy, DPPA established a minimum 17 per cent target for its annual multi-year appeal towards gender equality initiatives and programmes. DPPA also established a new USD \$3 million dedicated window for WPS, which later was increased to \$3.5 million. In 2021, DPPA invested a total of \$7.2 million (18 per cent) towards advancing the women, peace and security agenda exceeding its 17 per cent commitment.

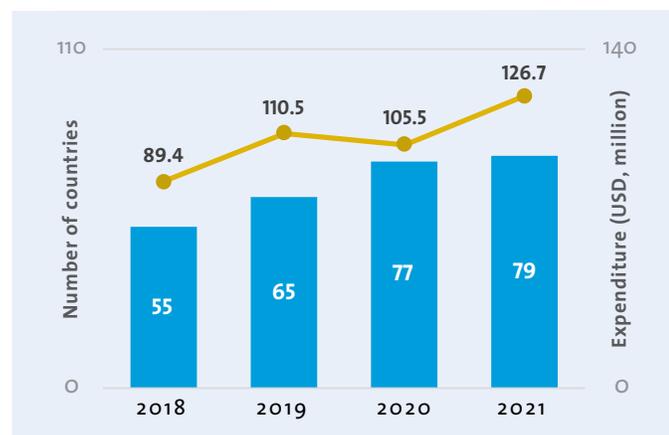
For peacekeeping, four missions¹³ apply a gender-marker for quick impact and trust fund projects to ensure funding supports women's meaningful participation, while others track projects targeting gender equality/women, peace and security through other assessment tools. In Lebanon, for example, the mission dedicated 15 percent of its budget for quick impact projects directly benefitting women and girls and donated computers and other equipment and supplies to women's associations. In Kosovo, 94 per cent of the programmatic activities of UNMIK in the 2020/2021 fiscal year integrated gender/WPS.

UN-Women's allocations have risen in response to the increased demands for programming in conflict and crisis-affected settings. In 2021, UN Women allocated \$126.7 million on peace and security programming, humanitarian interventions and disaster risk reduction in 79 countries, a marked increase from \$89.4 million in 55 countries in 2018 (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Number of conflict- or crisis-affected countries supported and expenditure by UN Women's peace and security programming, humanitarian intervention, and disaster risk reduction and resilience, 2018-2021

■ Number of countries
● Expenditure

SOURCE: UN Women



In addition to the application of markers and benchmarks, reviews have found that inadequate resourcing of gender units, gender expertise and gender analysis across the UN system have undermined efforts to mainstream a gender perspective and carry out mandates relating to gender equality, including those set by the Security Council. Prioritizing core budgetary funds for dedicated gender capacity and technical expertise is essential for effective and sustainable delivery on WPS goals and commitments. Challenges remain in the Fifth Committee for support to fully fund the required resources needed for senior gender advisers and gender affairs officers, as well as specific technical expertise such as data analysts. Some peacekeeping and special political missions have managed to close capacity gaps through extra-budgetary funded positions or through gratis/seconded personnel. However, these are often short-term solutions. Similar experiences are reported in the deployment of women's protection advisers, and many other entities report challenges in securing adequate support for dedicated expertise, including specialists in gender-based violence prevention, and risk mitigation and response in humanitarian crises. There is also inadequate support for technical functions, such as data collection and analysis.

¹⁴MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNMIK, UNISFA

C. United Nations Country Teams

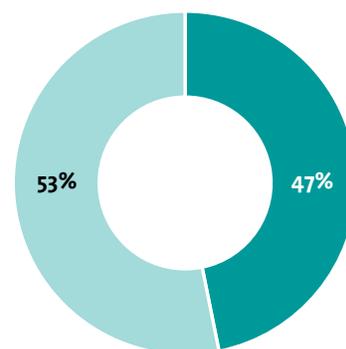
When the implementation of the UN-focused WPS directives was reviewed by the Executive Committee in 2021 there was insufficient information available from United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) to assess progress against the 2019 directive on benchmarks and the target to allocate a minimum of 15 per cent of programmatic budgets to gender equality and the empowerment of women and improve the gender mainstreaming in all areas of expenditures. Since then, continued collaboration between the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) and UN-Women to support field testing of the UNCT gender equality marker and develop guidance is improving access to data and analysis.

The UNCT gender equality marker was introduced in 2018 with UN INFO, a digital platform used by UNCTs to boost transparency and accountability for development coordination, managed by DCO. The inclusion of the gender equality marker as a mandatory requirement into the design and development of UN INFO has been an important factor in encouraging reporting and improving access to information. The roll-out of UN INFO 2.0 in 2021 led to an increase in the number of UNCTs applying the gender equality marker to Joint Work Plans. It is now a mandatory reporting in UN INFO with a four-point gender marker scale applied to the UNCT Joint Work Plan annual funding framework.

As of June 2022, 79 UNCTs had reported figures for their annual funding framework period 2021 in UN INFO¹⁵. Among them, 47 per cent (37 out of 79) allocated 70 per cent or more available resources to activities with gender equality as a principal or significant objective (UNCT-GEM 2 or GEM 3) (Figure 9). Nearly one third of them (25 out of 79) exceeded the minimum 15 per cent target for resources dedicated to activities with gender equality as a principal objective (UNCT-GEM 3) (Figure 10). The share was higher in conflict-affected countries, with nearly half (11 of 23). Results and the quality of data between UNCTs differ. More work is needed to ensure all UNCT have the tools and capacity to track and report quality data on gender financing.

Figure 9. Distribution of UNCTs with a Joint Work Plan in UN INFO 2.0 that allocated 70% or more of the UNCT annual funding framework available resources to activities with gender equality as a principal or significant objective, 2021

- 42 out of 79 UNCTs with data (53%) allocated less than 70% of resources on activities with gender equality as a principal or significant objective
- 37 out of 79 UNCTs with data (47%) allocated 70% or more resources to activities with gender equality as a principal or significant objective

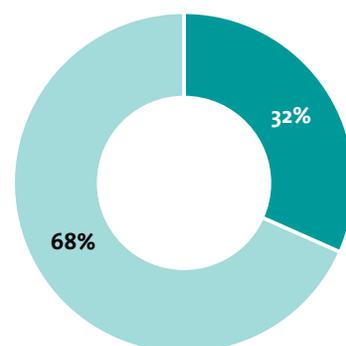


NOTE: QCPR Monitoring Framework (2021-2024) indicator 1.4.18.

SOURCES: UN INFO (<https://uninfo.org/>) provided by DCO in June 2022.

Figure 10. Distribution of UNCTs with a Joint Work Plan in UN INFO 2.0 that allocated 15% or more of the UNCT annual funding framework available resources to activities with gender equality as a principal objective, 2021

- 54 out of 79 UNCTs with data (68%) allocated less than 15% of resources to activities with gender equality as a principal objective
- 25 out of 79 UNCTs with data (32%) allocated 15% or more resources to activities with gender equality as a principal objective



SOURCES: UN INFO (<https://uninfo.org/>) provided by DCO in June 2022.

¹⁵ Additional information can be accessed at: <https://uninfo.org/data-explorer/cooperation-framework/activity-report>

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This assessment shows that more work is needed to further advance the UN directives on financing for gender equality, including the adoption of benchmarks. Gender equality is a priority of the UN and foundational to efforts to build and sustain peace and deliver on the SDGs. Ensuring that there are adequate resources in place to effectively deliver on gender equality mandates and commitments are particularly critical at this juncture in time when hard-won gains on gender equality are facing rollback and women's human rights are under threat, including in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise in conflict and crises.

Looking ahead to the next convergence of anniversaries of global commitments in 2025, the UN system must lead by example on resourcing of gender equality goals and commitments. A measurable increase in the application of targets and financial allocations on gender equality should be seen across the UN system by entities, pooled funds and country teams. The next two years will be of great importance in terms of ensuring that standards, guidance and systems to monitor results are in place. Building on good practice and lessons learned, the following actions will be central to accelerating progress on the UN-specific financing commitments:

- A. Strengthen senior leadership accountability through integration of requirements to track and report on allocations to gender equality priorities and benchmarks in senior compacts and entity-specific policies and strategic plans.
- B. Under the leadership of the UN System Chief Executives Board (CEB) Finance and Budget Network, the UNSDG and UN-Women continue work towards the harmonization and standard methodology of gender markers to ensure comparability across the UN system. Progress on markers for funds with gender equality both as a principal objective and as a significant (mainstreamed) objective should be tracked. The ability to track and report on allocations and expenditures for gender equality should be built into financial management systems.
- C. Update guidance on financial benchmarks for UN financing for gender equality, including their application in conflict and crisis-affected setting, and increase the number of entities with financial benchmarks. This should be based on a common methodology and take into account issues such as comparability and quality in their application and reporting.
- D. Invest in gender-responsive political and conflict analysis and needs assessments to better inform policy decisions, programming, and related financial allocations. There is a need to further strengthen the consistency, quality and coherence of the gender analysis employed by the UN.
- E. Consistently advocate for adequate resourcing in regular and extrabudgetary budget proposals to ensure the UN and its entities have the necessary architecture and human resources in place, including gender and technical expertise, to effectively deliver on gender equality and WPS priorities and related programmatic interventions, and track allocations and monitor progress across these.
- F. Build the capacity of personnel at HQ and in the field, as well as partners, for application of the gender equality marker and monitoring and reporting on financial allocation and expenditures across thematic areas and settings.
- G. Increase data accessibility and transparency by ensuring that information on investments on gender equality is reported to the CEB, and information is shared with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and the OECD as part of the minimum financial data standards.
- H. Advocate for the use of tools such as the gender marker and financial benchmarks in engagements with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) as well as private sector investments, and integrate conflict-sensitive gender analysis and impact assessments into IFI country assessments as well as the World Bank Risk Resilience Assessments (RRAs) carried out jointly with the UN.

ANNEX. Timeline: Commitments and decisions on financing for gender equality in the UN system

2006	UN System Chief Executives Board (CEB) launches UN system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women. To operationalize the Board's policy, a United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (SWAP) was developed, which emphasized the need for adequate human and financial resources and tools to track and report data (endorsed in 2012).
2009	Secretary-General's 2009 report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881–S/2009/304, paragraph 79) <i>“ensure that United Nations-managed funds and in particular the United Nations Development Group Multi-Donor Trust Funds will pilot a system pioneered by UNDP to allow decision-makers to track gender-related allocations”</i>
2010	Secretary-General's 2010 report on women's participation in peacebuilding (A/65/354–S/2010/466, paragraph 36) <i>“to ensure that at least 15 per cent of United Nations-managed funds in support of peacebuilding are dedicated to projects whose principal objective, consistent with organizational mandates”</i>
2010	Creation of UN Women by Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 July 2010 (A/RES/64/289)
2011	Secretary-General's Policy Committee tasked the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality to develop common principles to ensure the various UN gender marker systems are comparable
2012	UN system Chief Executives Board (CEB) endorsed UN-SWAP accountability framework for gender mainstreaming making the gender equality marker and financial targets a mandatory standard (including two performance indicators: financial resource tracking and allocation).
2012	General Assembly (OCPR) & ECOSOC resolutions mandate the adoption and implementation of gender markers and financial targets
2013	Launch of Gender Equality Marker Guidance Note by UN Development Group (UNDG)
2014	UN-SWAP Gender Marker Working Group was formed under CEB Finance and Budget Network (FBN)
2015	Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015)
2016	General Assembly (QCPR) resolution calls upon all entities of the UNDS to implement UN-SWAP & UNCT-SWAP, including resource tracking
2017	UN Women supported the UN Development Cooperation Office (DCO) to integrate the gender equality marker in UN INFO
2017 - 2019	ECOSOC resolutions calls upon the UN System to increase investment in GEWE, including through enhanced common budgetary frameworks, joint funding mechanisms, including pooled funding, and joint resource mobilization efforts
2018	Launch of UN-SWAP 2.0 and the updated UNCT-SWAP Scorecard endorsed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). Both UN-SWAP 2.0 and UNCT-SWAP include performance indicators on financial resource tracking.
2018	Secretary-General created High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality
2018	UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Finance and Budget Network (FBN) launched the CEB Guidance Notes on Coding Definitions and Quality Assurance
2019	Launch of UNCT Gender Marker Guidance Note and inclusion of Gender Markers in UN INFO as a mandatory field



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