



IN BRIEF



# MAKING SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION WORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Photo: TR Photos/Theron Rapoo

## The issue

Developing countries today have a vast wealth of experience on realizing development gains. But knowledge, skills and rates of progress vary widely. The era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for transforming the world to leave no one behind, has significantly sharpened the imperative of different countries learning from each other. By cooperating in a spirit of global partnership, they can unleash the rapid advances to which the Agenda aspires.

In line with its own Strategic Plan and a number of international agreements, including the 2030 Agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action, UN Women supports South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) to propel positive changes, innovations, new partnerships and significantly larger pools of finance. All efforts are geared towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which are fundamental to all 17 of the Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals.

Typically, **South-South cooperation** brings together two or more developing countries to exchange resources and know-how that expand capacities for development. **Triangular cooperation** generally involves adding a northern developed country partner, although it can also occur only among developing countries.

*Photo:* Tebogo Mashego, 35, is a South African entrepreneur who took part in UN Women's Sharefair on Gender Equality in the Extractive Industries in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2015.

## Our solutions

As a leading global champion of gender equality and women's empowerment, UN Women has a proven record of advancing meaningful changes on the ground. It operates through a wide collaborative network of UN and non-UN bodies with a presence in every region of the world.

To build on the current surge in demand for SSTC, and channel it into accelerated action for gender equality and women's empowerment, UN Women pursues several core strategies across its normative, programmatic, advocacy and coordination efforts.

Working with key UN entities and development partners, it shares **knowledge and good practices** across countries and regions, helping governments and other SSTC initiatives in adopting effective gender-responsive approaches. Assistance in cultivating **institutional mechanisms, capacities and skills** supports better management, implementation and monitoring of SSTC, including in key areas not traditionally viewed through a gender lens.

**Expanded cooperation** with other UN agencies and stakeholders harnesses the full potential of partnership, with a special emphasis on long-term cooperation with countries playing leadership roles in SSTC. Systematic canvassing and sharing of **strategies and different funding modalities** supports the broader uptake of SSTC and other innovative forms of collaboration.

## How we make a difference

UN Women's blended approach to SSTC entails the use of electronic platforms, virtual schools, exchange visits, dialogues, global and regional communities of practice, peer-to-peer education and training-of-trainers, among other strategies. Through these, UN Women has achieved a number of results.

In 2016, for example, low-cost, targeted knowledge exchange helped national partners in a number of countries develop gender-responsive budgeting. This contributed to the revision of the Budget Law in Lao People's Democratic Republic, allowing sectoral ministries and national mechanisms to invest directly in the national gender equality agenda. For the first time, several Arab States countries formally committed to applying gender-responsive budgeting.

An East-East exchange workshop for experts from ministries of finance from five Eastern European countries helped articulate institutional roles, opportunities and challenges in gender mainstreaming in fiscal policies, and shared knowledge of past pilot strategies previously implemented with technical support from UN Women.

UN Women used its convening power to bring together 60 women from 15 states engaged in peacebuilding and refugee responses in Europe and Central Asia, and the Arab States. They galvanized the attention of government and aid agency representatives to the needs of women and girls 'on the move' through a joint public statement at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

An exchange of knowledge and good practices among countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific guided new insights on incorporating international human rights standards in legislation. In Jamaica, this resulted in the ratification of Convention 189 on labour standards for domestic workers. Twenty-five countries adjusted key guidance documents on preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

Sharefairs organized by UN Women in East and Southern Africa have brought together researchers, policymakers, development agencies, regional bodies, civil society organizations, business leaders, investors, and others to discuss innovations and good practices, and agree on methods to support gender equality and women's empowerment solutions in agriculture and extractive industries.

## What UN Women can offer

UN Women has made a promising start with SSTC, but the potential is great for doing much more. Some of the most important ways forward are:

### **DEVELOPING GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE AND A DATABASE:**

This will entail intensifying the collection, analysis and dissemination of better data and knowledge about the patterns, composition and impact of SSTC — the 'who', 'what', 'where', 'how' and 'how well'. It will operate within a framework that is demand-driven and led by Member States. A systematic sharing of data, analyses and information at regional and global levels could facilitate programmes at the country level.

### **STRENGTHENING INTRA-REGIONAL, CROSS-REGIONAL AND CROSS-PRACTICE WORK:**

Working across programming, policy and operational priorities, UN Women will help policymakers, practitioners and experts in the South and North access thematic and cross-sectoral knowledge on deploying modes of SSTC at country, regional, global levels.

**DEVELOPMENT OF CAPACITIES:** UN Women will partner with governments, intergovernmental bodies, civil society organizations, think tanks and the private sector to boost capacities to identify, plan, manage, monitor and evaluate SSTC. A particular focus will be on least developed countries and small island developing states seeking to better coordinate and benefit from diverse assistance modalities.

**'BROKERING' AND ADVISORY SERVICES:** To deepen and broaden the range of inclusive development and gender-responsive solutions sourced through SSTC, UN Women will tap its global network of country and regional offices. A steady flow of solutions and 'investment-ready' proposals will build on work with national, regional and other partners to develop these or source them globally. Advisory services will help state and non-state actors tailor solutions to specific needs and circumstances, link them to national SDG-related priorities, meet domestic and international safeguards and standards, and forge mutually beneficial SSTC agreements. On request, UN Women will anchor some solutions in its own regional and country programmes.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about UN Women's work on SSTC, email: [south.south@unwomen.org](mailto:south.south@unwomen.org).