

STRATEGIC NOTE

Albania

2022-2026





Photo: UN Women/Eduard Pagria

INTRODUCTION

ALBANIA'S GENDER EQUALITY LANDSCAPE

COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Albania is an upper middle-income economy with a Human Development Index of 0.796, ranking it 67th out of 191 countries and in the official “high” category.¹ Its economy is dominated by the services sector, especially tourism. The country joined NATO in 2009, and in 2021, Albania was elected for the first time to be a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. In July 2022, the negotiations for EU accession officially began. The EU accession process has become a cornerstone of Albania’s global integration and foreign policy agenda and a key driver of reforms.

Despite recent progress, Albania’s development trajectory continues to be severely hindered by high poverty rates, emigration of skilled workforce, persistent disparities, weak public administration services at both central and local levels, and deep mistrust toward public institutions and government authorities.

1. UNDP (2022). *Human Development Report 2021/2022*. Available [online](#).



Photo: UN Women

GENDER EQUALITY SNAPSHOT

The 2018 Voluntary National Review carried out by Albania indicated that 79 percent of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets linked to the specific objectives of the national strategic policy framework. Fifty-nine percent of the targets within SDG 5 on gender equality aligned with national policies. Gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) were highlighted as a priority in a number of national policy documents, namely the National Strategy for Integration and Development 2015-2020 ([NSDI II](#)), [the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020](#), and the National Strategy for Gender Equality (NSGE) [2021-2030](#). This commitment is further reinforced by Albania’s ambition to join the EU, where the gender-equality *acquis*² is a key requirement. Albania is also a signatory to several international instruments to guarantee the equality of women and men and eliminate gender-based discrimination. Notably, it acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1994, and in 2013 ratified the Istanbul Convention, formally known as the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. The 2022 Gender

Gap Report of the World Economic Forum places Albania 18th out of 156 countries, one of the three most-improved countries on the European continent.

Despite such a solid normative policy and legal framework, implementation is insufficient to achieve SDG 5 and other SDGs with a gender element. Key challenges include insufficient financial and human resources especially at the local government level, and weak accountability mechanisms to ensure implementation. Women remain segregated in lower-paid jobs historically regarded as traditionally female, while their unemployment rate continues to be higher than men’s and their earnings lower. Rural women have limited access to agricultural inputs and limited off-farm opportunities compared to men, such as land, property, productive assets, remittances, technology and finance.³ Violence against women and girls is still pervasive and deeply rooted in patriarchal traditions that have shaped Albanian society. Forty-eight percent of women aged 18-74 “agree or tend to agree” that domestic violence is a private matter, compared to 30 percent average across sampled countries in the region.⁴

2. *Acquis*, from the French word meaning “acquired”, refers to the collection of rights and obligations that form the basis of EU law, and that must be incorporated into the legal systems of EU Member States.
3. UN Women (2020). *Albania Country Gender Equality Brief*. Available [online](#).
4. OSCE (2019). *OSCE-led survey on violence against women: Well-being and safety of women*. Available [online](#).

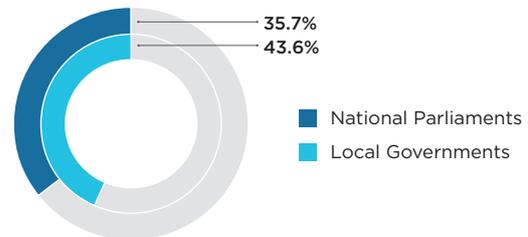
ALBANIA'S GENDER EQUALITY SNAPSHOT

figure 1
Gender Inequality Index



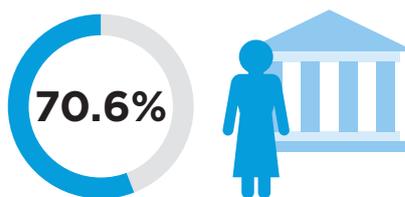
UNDP (2022). Human Development Report.
(Note: Figure provided is for 2021)

figure 2
Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments
Governance and Participation in Public Life



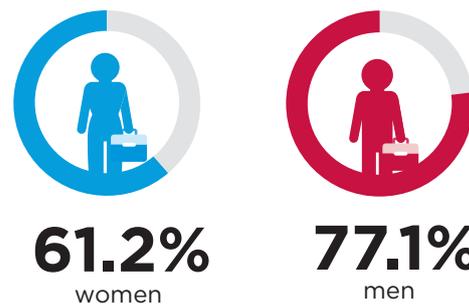
UNDESA (2022). SDG Indicator Global database. Extracted on Dec 2022. (Note (a): Lower Chamber or Unicameral; data valid as of 1 Jan of given year based on the number of seats filled in parliament at the time. Note (b): Administrative data on election results at municipal level (2019))

figure 3
Proportions of seats held by women in executive positions/ministers (cabinets)
Governance and Participation in Public Life



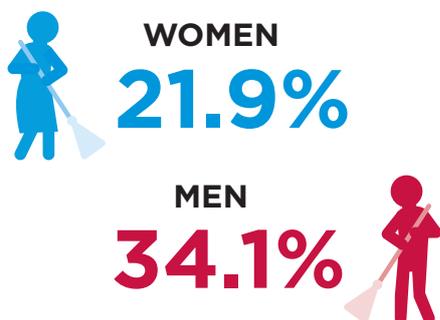
United Nations (2022). UN Albania Annual Progress Report 2021.
(Note: Figure provided is for 2021)

figure 4
Employment rate by sex
Women's Economic Empowerment



UN Women, INSTAT (2021). Women and Men in Albania. (Note: Refers to men and women aged 15-64)

figure 5
Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex
Women's Economic Empowerment



UN Women, INSTAT (2021). Women and Men in Albania. (Note: Refers to proportion of total non-agricultural employment)

figure 6
Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls (18-74) subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner
Ending Violence against Women



INSTAT (2019). Violence against Women and Girls in Albania.

UN WOMEN STRATEGIC NOTE: A roadmap to gender equality

The Strategic Note (SN) articulates the multi-year strategy, rationale, envisioned results, targets, and resource requirements for a UN Women Office. In essence, the SN provides a roadmap for improving the lives of women and girls in the context where UN Women operates. It is developed in consultation with key partners and in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UN Women's Strategic Plan and key national, regional, and global gender equality priorities. SNs are funded by a combination of core (loosely earmarked) and non-core resources (earmarked).

UN Women's SN is similar to a Country Programme Document (CPD) used by other UN entities.

UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Despite existing challenges, positive changes have helped foster a conducive environment for gender equality and women's empowerment in Albania. With UN Women's financial and technical support, Albania prepared the new NSGE 2021-2030, which better addresses the key gender gaps as well as the needs and priorities of all women and girls, and is better aligned with international and EU standards, including the Istanbul Convention, than the previous national strategy. Around 50 percent of the NSGE budget is dedicated to eliminating violence against women (EVAW), compared with 33.9 percent in the previous strategy, and

the funding gap for EVAW was reduced to 15 percent from 64 percent. Based on the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment conducted following the 2019 earthquake, UN Women was able to offer targeted and relevant services to women and girls across the worst-affected municipalities. These services included psycho-social support for survivors of violence and assistance to improved economic resilience and access property rights.

UN WOMEN ALBANIA'S KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (2021)

AROUND 9% OF FUNDS under the Medium-Term Budget Program 2023-2025 contribute to gender equality in Albania. Forty-seven budget programmes across 11 ministries and two state institutions were engendered. Five municipalities developed Local Gender Action Plans 2022 -2024 based on the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life.

500 WOMEN AND GIRLS actively participated in local budgeting processes and were able to influence municipalities' budgets to include their needs and priorities.

MORE THAN 1,500 WOMEN AND GIRLS accessed improved specialized services for survivors of all forms of violence. These included women and girls from rural and marginalized communities.

The **NEW NATIONAL STRATEGY ON AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES 2021-2027** includes specific measures and objectives pertaining to gender equality and rural women's empowerment.

Empowerment through self-defence is now part of the **NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR YOUTH (2022-2029)**, and it is incorporated in the extra-curricular programmes of Albanian public school.

To learn more about the work and results of UN Women Albania, visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

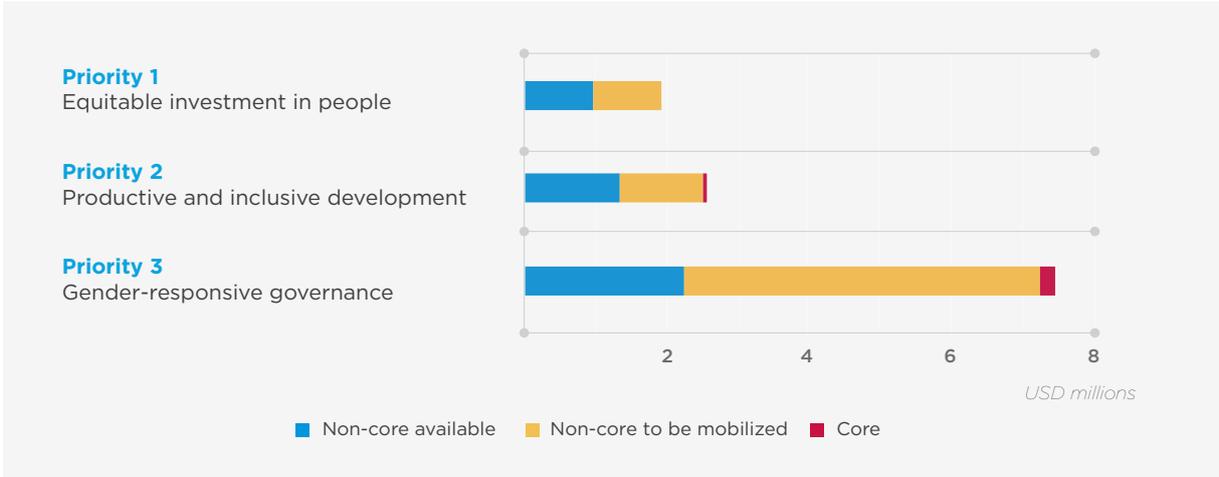
ALBANIA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The UN Country Team and the Government of Albania have agreed on a set of strategic development priorities. These are set forth in the [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\) 2022-2026](#), which adopts a twin-track approach to gender equality: Gender is mainstreamed across all outcomes of the UNSDCF; and it also constitutes a stand-alone

outcome (outcome C2 on gender-responsive governance). UN Women Albania's Strategic Note (SN) 2022-2026 pursues three priorities (see below), which are fully in line with the UNSDCF and national priorities, and also aligned with [UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#).

figure 7

ALBANIA RESOURCES 2022-2025



Data displayed are indicative estimates based on expected resource requirements and available funds as of December 2022. For more up-to-date resources data please visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

AS A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS,
UN WOMEN CONVENES AND INFLUENCES A RANGE OF
PARTNERS FOR A GREATER AND LONG-LASTING IMPACT

All women and girls fully enjoy and exercise their human rights in a gender equal society and meaningfully contribute to Albania's sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development and EU integration

IMPACT

COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTION
(priority results)

EQUITABLE INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE

Improve the government's capacity to design, implement and monitor **gender-responsive social protection policies**

PRODUCTIVE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Improve the capacity of the government, CSOs, and the private sector to implement **policies/programmes on innovative and digital economy**

GENDER-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

Increase the government's and CSOs' capacities to **implement gender equality commitments** and EU priorities

Increase government institutions' capacity to **leverage resources** for GEWE

Increase the government's and CSOs' capacity to **prevent and respond to violence** against women and girls

UN WOMEN SOLUTIONS*

Strengthen the government's capacity on **climate change adaptation**, integrating GEWE commitments

Increase women and girls' capacities and opportunities to **lead and influence decision-making**

Improve the knowledge and capacities of leaders and men and boys to **address harmful norms and stereotypes** that drive gender discrimination

Increase national partners' capacities to **generate and use disaggregated data**

Equip UN Systems in Albania with **effective coordination** mechanisms and capacities to promote gender equality

CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Lack of gender-responsive and evidence-based social protection policies

Strongly gendered labour market, women working in lower-skilled, "traditionally female," and informal jobs

Women in positions of public leadership face persisting patriarchal power dynamics

Violence against women and girls is still pervasive and deeply rooted in patriarchal traditions

Region highly susceptible to earthquakes, wildfires, and floods that disproportionately affect women

*UN Women solutions are aligned to UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

UN WOMEN'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

UN Women is strategically positioned to support national partners in achieving the vision set forth by the NSGE 2021-2030, as well as by ensuring that the gender equality elements in all other national strategies and plans can be implemented. UN Women works closely with its key partners, such as the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Finance and the Economy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), media, the private sector and UN agencies to make progress against SDG 5 and related targets in Albania. UN Women is uniquely positioned to: 1) support the translation of international gender norms and standards and the EU gender equality acquis into national policies and legislation; 2) influence gender-responsive governance systems and sustainable financing for gender equality across sectors, including through strengthened gender-responsive budgeting and

improved gender statistics; 3) promote a strong feminist agenda to transform social norms, challenge gender stereotypes, and end violence against women, including through its work with women CSOs at central and local levels; and 4) introduce a gender lens across programmatic interventions and sectoral areas, ensure the application of the “leave no one behind” approach, and nurture synergies amongst its programme areas as well as with other partners and UN agencies.

**NËSE ZËRI
YT NUK DO
TË KISHTE
FUQI, ATA
NUK DO TË
PROVONIN TË
TA MBYLLNIN
GOJËN**

Photo: UN Women/Ilektra Jole
Translation: “If your voice had no power, they would not try to silence you”.



UN WOMEN ALBANIA'S STRATEGY

PRIORITY RESULT 1: Equitable Investment in People

UN Women Albania is consolidating efforts made in the previous SN to support social inclusion and social care reform mainly through the second phase of the UN Joint Programme “Leave No One Behind”. UN Women Albania will take a holistic approach to empower vulnerable persons and groups to have equal access to public services that support their social rights, social inclusion and well-being, and are empowered to have a voice in public policy decision-making affecting their lives, and to hold decision-makers accountable for policy implementation. This specific SN priority result interrelates with gender-responsive planning and budgeting and participatory processes at the local level, as well as strengthened production, access to and use of disaggregated data. UN Women builds on its comparative advantage in intersecting gender with other social cleavages and looking at structural causes of gender inequality and intersectional social exclusion of vulnerable women and girls.

PARTNERS

Main donors: Swiss Development Cooperation

Partners: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), selected Local Government Units, Faculty of Social Work, civil society organizations.

UN WOMEN
DRIVES RESULTS
ADVANCING
NORMATIVE
STANDARDS,
COORDINATING
ACTION ACROSS
THE UNITED
NATIONS, AND
OPERATING ON
THE GROUND

Photo: UN Women



PRIORITY RESULT 2: Productive and Inclusive Development

This SN priority result builds on efforts to expand programmatic interventions to new emerging areas identified by the UNSDCF, including climate change and transition to a green and blue economy. UN Women Albania will ensure that: 1) government institutions, CSOs and the private sector have the capacity to design, implement and monitor policies and programmes focused on innovative and digital economy that contribute to women's economic empowerment; 2) planning and coordination mechanisms have strengthened capacities for climate change adaptation and mitigation, including disaster risk reduction, ensuring integration of gender equality commitments; and 3) women and young people have improved access to productive and financial resources, information and skill development opportunities to increase their participation

in the labour market. UN Women Albania focuses on a "building back better" approach in the response to crisis and emergency situations that require swift actions.

PARTNERS

Main donors: Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, INSTAT, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), civil society organizations, Local Government Units, Agency for Civil Protection, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth.

PRIORITY RESULT 3: Gender-Responsive Governance

This SN priority result is central to UN Women Albania's strategic proposition and represents the largest portion of its programmatic involvement. To achieve this outcome, UN Women Albania will work towards: 1) increased capacities of the national gender machinery and public administration at central and local levels, public oversight institutions and CSOs to support, design and monitor implementation of international and national commitments and EU priorities for gender equality; 2) increased capacities of government institutions at central and local levels to plan, budget, monitor, track expenditures, and leverage resources for gender equality and women's empowerment in targeted sectors; 3) increased capacities of government institutions at central and local levels and of CSOs to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls, with a focus on vulnerable groups; 4) improved knowledge and capacities of influential leaders, communities, men and boys, women and girls to address harmful norms, stereotypes, and behaviours that drive violence against women and girls and gender discrimination, with an intersectional lens; 5) increased capacities and opportunities of change agents (CSOs, grassroot groups, citizens, including women rights entities) and women and girls to lead, participate in, monitor and influence decision-making processes and

resources for gender equality at national and local levels; 6) increased capacities of national and local partners to generate and use comprehensive disaggregated data to advocate for, develop, implement and monitor gender-responsive evidence-based policies and programmes; and 7) increased capacities and tools of the UN Country Team in Albania to effectively mainstream gender equality across all programming.

PARTNERS

Main donors: Sida, UN Peacebuilding Fund, European Union

Partners: UNDP, UNFPA; UNESCO; EU Delegation; line ministries such as Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and Economy, and others; national human rights institutions; Albanian School of Public Administration; School of Magistrates; Local Government Units; civil society organizations; INSTAT; State Supreme Audit Institution, Office of the Ombudsperson, parliamentarians; young women and men in the region, media, young journalists, young researchers, academia private sector.

BECOMING A FUNDING PARTNER

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 calls for transformative, collaborative action. Strategic, innovative, and efficient funding partnerships are essential to realize UN Women's vision of a gender-equal world, articulated in the SN.

HOW CAN FUNDING PARTNERS ENGAGE WITH UN WOMEN'S SN?

Partners may provide **SN direct funding**, which is softly earmarked by geography (regional or country SN). These funds are flexible and catalytic; they enable UN Women to choose the highest-impact use of the funds in the country in which it operates. SN funding is also predictable, as commitments are often made for the full SN time span, better enabling transformative results for women and girls.

Importantly, SN direct funds strengthen UN Women's ability to respond to emerging needs in response to unforeseen contextual changes, including humanitarian needs (e.g., to prioritize the safety of women and girls in

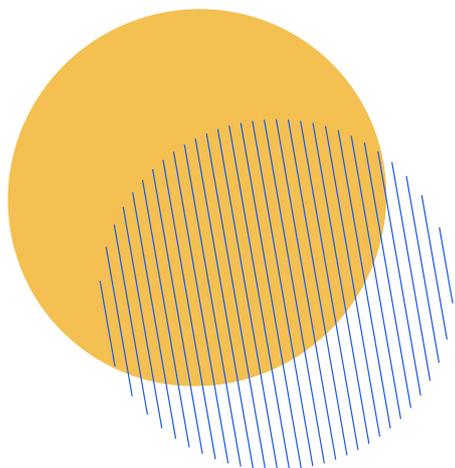
a crisis or in response to the adverse effects of natural disasters).

Furthermore, these funds can be reallocated when emerging evidence suggests a new approach is needed to produce the desired result more efficiently or effectively. They can be used for diverse types of costs and can therefore draw funds to areas that are often unfunded—yet crucial—such as advocacy for behavioural change, UN coordination, etc., supporting the organization's effectiveness.

Funding partners may also provide **project funding**, which is tightly earmarked for a specific project or initiative in the SN. These funds are not flexible. Reporting on the use of such funds is done against the specific project but not against the full SN.

SN funding represents an ambitious, targeted, and smart investment in gender equality and women's empowerment.

To learn more about UN Women Albania's funding partners landscape visit our [Transparency Portal](#).



UN SYSTEM COORDINATION

UN Women Albania leverages its UN coordination mandate to support the UN System to mainstream gender equality across all its programming. UN Women chairs the Gender Thematic and Results Group and the Outcome Group on Gender responsive governance within the UNSDCF. UN Women has regularly developed joint tools and knowledge products that can be used by all agencies to support gender mainstreaming, led joint advocacy efforts during key international days including International Women’s Day and the 16-Days campaign to end violence against women, and led reporting against the Gender Equality Scorecard of the UN Country Team’s System-Wide Action Plan (UNCT SWAP), established to advance UN accountability on gender mainstreaming. Building on its history with the Delivering as One approach in Albania, UN Women will keep leveraging pooled funding mechanisms (both locally and at the global level) to promote greater programmatic

coherence. UN Women is currently participating in or leading multiple joint programmes: It leads and coordinates the EU for Gender Equality joint programme (with UNFPA), which aims to strengthen governance structures and practices at central and local levels for the implementation of the EU gender equality acquis. UN Women also leads the second phase of the Joint Programme on Ending Violence Against Women in Albania, implemented with UNDP and UNFPA. UN Women continues to promote gender mainstreaming in other inter-agency groups on areas of common interest (e.g. UN Association, UN Youth Advisory Group, Joint Communication Group, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force, and UN Operations Management Team).

JOINT PROGRAMMING*

OUR JOINT PROGRAMMES:

Ending Violence Against Women Phase II, led by UN Women and implemented with UNDP and UNFPA, (2022-2025)

Leaving No One Behind, implemented with UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA (2021-2025)

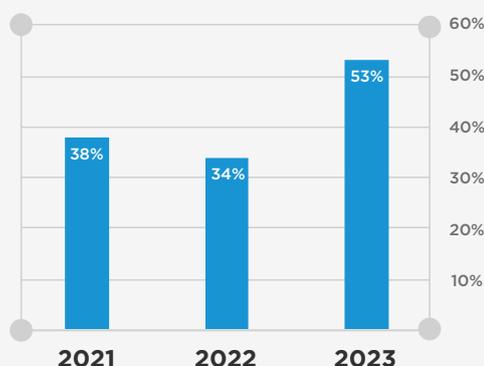
Youth for Inclusion Equality and Trust, regional joint program funded by the UN PBF and , implemented with UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA (2022-2024)

EU 4 Gender Equality, led by UN Women and implemented with UNFPA (2021- 2023)

Strategic policy options for SDG financing, implemented with UNDP, UNICEF, ILO (2020-2023)

figure 8

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE FROM JOINT PROGRAMMES:



* Information as of January 2023. All JPs use a pool fund mechanisms through the UN Albania SDG Acceleration Fund

**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY
AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO
ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING
THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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