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Report of the Twentieth Annual Session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality

New York, 14-15 March 2023

The Twentieth Annual Session of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) was held on 14-15 March 2023 in New York. Discussions focused on the upcoming high-level Summits linked to our Common Agenda, and the implications and entry points for gender equality; the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women; the role of global and country-level inter-agency coordination mechanisms in collectively supporting gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda; thematic and emerging issues of system-wide relevance; and a discussion on capacity building on gender mainstreaming in the UN System. The session also featured an interactive dialogue with the Chair of the IANWGE, Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women, on the important role of the Network in strengthening coordination and knowledge sharing on gender mainstreaming and broader gender equality issues within the UN System

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Welcome and Adoption of Agenda

The twentieth annual session of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) was held from 14-15 March 2023 in New York. Ms. Leslie Groves, Senior Gender Equality Consultant, facilitated the meeting. Ms. Aparna Mehrotra, Director, UN System Coordination Division, UN Women, and Secretary of IANWGE, delivered opening remarks.

Ms. Mehrotra warmly welcomed the IANWGE members, and in particular those who had travelled to New York to join the annual meeting in-person. She noted that this was the first face-to-face meeting since 2019 and conveyed her sincere appreciation to the Network for its continued commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women during the prior challenging years. She observed that given the various setbacks to women's rights and gender equality that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual session was timely, taking place during the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-67).

The Secretary encouraged the Network to continue to seek common approaches and develop joint products which demonstrate IANWGE's collective contribution to gender equality, especially to key intergovernmental processes and outcomes relevant to the gender equality agenda. She also reiterated the Secretariat's commitment to continue providing members with key insights and information of systemwide relevance related to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

With reference to the annual meeting agenda, Ms. Mehrotra expressed appreciation to all those who had contributed to the planning of the annual meeting, as well as to the members who had volunteered to participate as discussants and moderators in the various sessions. After the 2023 annual meeting agenda was formally presented to members (See Annex 1), it was adopted without any amendments or additions.

Session I: Fireside Chat: Our Common Agenda, upcoming high-level Summits and linkages with gender equality and the empowerment of women

The objective of the first session was to brief IANWGE members on Our Common Agenda and the upcoming strategic high-level events linked to it, including the 2023 SDG Summit and the 2024 Summit of the Future, focusing in particular on the related implications for the UN system's work on gender equality. The discussion sought to identify opportunities for IANWGE to contribute to the Summits and Our Common Agenda processes. The session, which included a presentation and a table reflection exercise, was moderated by Ms. Groves.

Ms. Michèle Griffin, Director of the Common Agenda Team, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, noted that the Common Agenda Report infused messaging on gender equality with a particular focus on the need for a new social contract and new global governance arrangements. The transformative measures contained in the report inter alia include the importance of repealing discriminatory laws and increasing women's political participation.

In the context of the Summit of the Future in 2024, Ms. Griffin highlighted that the Summit presents a unique opportunity to enhance cooperation on critical challenges and address gaps in global governance, while reaffirming existing commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the invitation of Member States, the Secretary-General is issuing a series of Policy Briefs to provide more detail on proposals contained in Our Common Agenda and to support Member States' deliberations as they prepare for the Summit of the Future. These briefs include an analysis of the proposals' impact on the implementation of the SDGs, and will be informed by the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, with gender equality as a cross-cutting theme.

The <u>themes of the Policy Briefs</u> are (1) Future generations; (2) Emergency Platform; (3) Youth engagement; (4) Beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP); (5) Global digital compact; (6) Public information; (7) International Financial Architecture; (8) Outer space; (9) Towards a new agenda for peace; (10) Transforming education; and (11) United Nations 2.0.

With reference to the upcoming SDG Summit 2023, Ms. Marion Barthelemy, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination, DESA, noted that the Political Declaration of the 2019 SDG Summit was the last such Declaration to include a notable number of references to gender equality. In this context, Ms. Barthelemy invited the IANWGE members to consider participating in and contributing to the messaging for the 2023 SDG Summit to ensure that gender considerations are more prevalent. Such participation could, for example, include sharing proposed language and broader messaging with Member State delegations in support of gender equality mandates; encouraging Member States to participate in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF); understanding and influencing the interests of the various negotiating blocs; and mobilizing well-researched public opinion to equip governments with the necessary data and information on gender equality.

Additionally, the Deputy Secretary-General recently shared <u>three recommendations</u> from the forthcoming Secretary-General's SDG Progress Report which will inter alia assess and reflect on the first seven years of SDG implementation. These recommendations also present good entry points to engage with the SDG Summit from a gender perspective.

In the context of the Summit of the Future 2024, Ms. Barthelemy advised that the Network proposes multi-stakeholder initiatives that impact gender equality, similar to the Secretary-General's steering committee which mobilizes the UN system around key issues. IANWGE may also advocate for any additional gender equality commitments required by Member States to advance progress on gender-related SDGs; develop transformative and integrated policies which promote synergies between the SDGs; and reach out to penholders of policy briefs to ensure that gender considerations and language are well integrated.

This session included a reflection exercise during which members explored (1) what stood out for them from the conversation and what potential implications of this content are for their respective entities; and (2) what IANWGE could do to contribute to Our Common Agenda and the upcoming high-level Summits. Some of the reflections that were subsequently shared included:

- i. The importance of a nuanced understanding of gender equality issues, intergovernmental processes, and other thematic and topical areas relevant to the SDGs implementation within the context of these Summits.
- ii. The gap between intention and implementation, which sometimes emanates from challenges both at the grassroots and policy level.
- iii. The proposal to develop a joint working paper as part of an IANWGE contribution to the Summit(s).
- iv. The proposal to consider developing a joint statement by Heads of IANWGE entities as an IANWGE contribution to the Summit(s).

<u>Action point:</u> IANWGE members to explore the possibility of developing a joint working paper and/or a joint statement as noted above as a contribution to the Summit(s).

Session II: CSW-67 Priority theme: Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

The objective of the session was to update IANWGE on the status of negotiations of the <u>CSW-67</u> Agreed Conclusions under the priority theme *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the key issues emerging therein.* The session was moderated by Ms. Sharon J. Taylor, Coordination Advisor, UN Women.

The Network was briefed by Ms. Sarah Hendriks, Director, Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division, UN Women, who highlighted the salience of the priority theme given the current global climate. Ms. Hendriks noted that the theme presented a critical opportunity to acknowledge the seismic shifts happening across the world in terms of innovation and technology and the impact of these shifts on the lives of women and girls. She further shared that there was a notably renewed sense of energy surrounding CSW as thousands of representatives from Member State delegations, civil society youth-led organizations and other partners convened in New York to engage and participate in person again after the pandemic.

It was further noted that the outcome of CSW-67 will likely influence and set the tone, pace, content, and standards of future normative frameworks such as the Global Compact, the upcoming SDG Summit, and other critical processes in the intergovernmental space. One of the key messages from this year's CSW is the importance of reasserting a human-centric approach to digitalization, where the values of intersectionality, systemic change, and inclusion are taken seriously.

Ms. Hendriks reflected on five foundational misconceptions of the gendered dimensions of technology and innovation that were highlighted in the <u>Secretary-General's Report on the Priority Theme</u>:

- 1. The use of digital tools and services will not automatically increase with universal internet access.
- 2. There is no singular universal type of gender digital divide, but rather a confluence of factors which are context dependent and impact women to different degrees.
- 3. Efforts are wrongly focused on "fixing women" instead of the people or institutions that are perpetuating stereotypes.
- 4. Digitalization cannot be an equalizer of opportunities without a clear and deliberate intention to develop gender transformative innovation.

5. Digital cooperation focus on technical and infrastructural issues and the digital economy, is overlooking gendered impacts and benefit across multiple agendas.

She also highlighted four sub-themes from the Report which form the basis of the CSW-67 Agreed Conclusions:

- 1. Access: An intersectional approach is needed to address the gender gaps in digital access but also in digital competencies and skills. This implies expanding meaningful access and use of technology, learning and skills, including the inequalities in STEM and STEM education around the world only 28% of engineering graduates and 22% of artificial intelligence workers worldwide are female at present.
- 2. <u>Ecosystems:</u> How to shape inclusive and transformative ecosystems that acknowledge the male-dominance of the tech industry, also referred to as "tech bros". The transition to digitalization could expand women's employment and increase representation in the tech industry.
- 3. <u>Design:</u> This explores aspects of artificial intelligence (AI) and the embeddedness of both gender and racial bias a global analysis of 133 AI systems found that 44% demonstrated gender bias and 25% had both gender and racial bias embedded in them and the importance of applying a human rights-based approach to the design of the technology itself. In the digital space, women and girls are rarely viewed as creators and designers.
- 4. <u>Safety:</u> The prevention and elimination of technology facilitated gender-based violence has been a significant part of the negotiations with various Member States taking different views on the language of "tech facilitated gender-based violence." Notably, the continuum of offline and online ICT facilitated GBV serves to silence, harm, discredit, marginalize and ultimately forced more women offline.

The Advance Unedited Version of the CSW-67 Agreed Conclusions that were adopted by the Commission can be accessed here.

Session III: Dialogue with Chair of IANWGE, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women Ms. Sima Bahous

The objective of the session was to provide IANWGE members with an opportunity to engage with Ms. Bahous, Chair of IANWGE; Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women, and to share their perspectives on the role of the network within the context of the broader UN system. The session was moderated by Ms. Angela Mwai, Gender Advisor, UN-HABITAT and included remarks followed by an interactive Q&A.

From the outset, Ms. Bahous underscored her commitment to placing gender equality and the empowerment of women at the heart of the work of the United Nations. She further noted that she was pleased to address the Network for the first time in her capacity as Chair, and since joining UN Women as Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director. She also commended IANWGE for its significant contributions in advancing the gender equality agenda across the UN system over the years.

In the context of CSW-67, Ms. Bahous noted that the Commission offered a unique opportunity to shape a future where technology contributes to transforming social norms and creating a safe online space for everyone. In respect to the SDGs, she emphasised the need for urgent and ongoing attention towards ending gender inequality. Ms. Bahous emphasised that violence against women remains very high in

many countries, while the global health and humanitarian crisis have further increased the risk of violence, especially for the most vulnerable women and girls. Furthermore, women's representation in positions of power and decision-making continues to remain below parity and if this pattern continues, SDG 5 – which underpins all the other SDGs – will not be met. Therefore, touching upon the developments at the highest levels in the system, she noted that the Common Agenda is a resounding call to place women and girls at the center of development, given its focus on global cooperation and identifying solutions to the most pressing problems.

In her concluding remarks, Ms. Bahous encouraged IANWGE members to continue advocating and supporting the work of gender equality in their respective entities. She underscored that Network remains the only mechanism within the system at headquarters level that promotes collaboration and coordination on gender mainstreaming and on gender equality issues more broadly.

IANWGE members were also urged to strengthen capacities for gender mainstreaming across the UN system, through the development and production of tools and methodologies on gender mainstreaming and gender equality that can be applied both at headquarters and country level.

To strengthen the human development nexus which includes areas such as food security, refugees, peace and security, and women's rights, the Chair committed her ongoing support to the work of the Network.

Lastly, she recommended that the Network continues to identify and address emerging issues for which gender perspectives are greatly needed, especially in technical areas where they are often limited or completely lacking. The importance of developing think pieces on pertinent gender equality issues was emphasized, particularly in the context of intergovernmental work. She used CSW as a case in point, referencing requests by delegations who sought more information on the recent push back against gender equality and strategies to protect women and girls.

Following the Chair's remarks, members expressed their appreciation for the Network. They noted that the Network functions a collective space to develop joint products, exchange knowledge, renew solidarity and share the oft-overlapping challenges encountered while advocating for gender equality issues. Members further reiterated their support to IANWGE and in particular for contributing to thought leadership through the development research pieces and tools relevant to gender equality.

Session IV: Thematic and Emerging Issues of System-Wide Relevance

The objective of the session was to provide IANWGE members with a platform to share their recent work and good practices pertaining to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The session was moderated by Ms. Fleur Newman, UNFCCC Action Empowerment Unit Lead.

The Global Environment Facility: Opportunities for systemwide collaboration to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment

As a new member entity of IANWGE, Ms. Verona Collantes, Senior Gender Specialist, Global Environment Facility (GEF), provided an introductory overview of the gender-related work of the GEF.¹ GEF's unique role as a financial mechanism involves supporting the implementation of key environmental Conventions. This is achieved through supporting national plan and strategy development; investing in national priorities; transparency enhancement; as well as capacity building and technical assistance.

In her presentation, Ms. Collantes outlined the GEF's different family of funds and their focus on specific thematic areas. She noted that the GEF Trust Fund serves as the core funding mechanism. She further highlighted that during the <u>Convention on Biodiversity's Conference of the Parties (COP) 15</u> in December 2022, the <u>Global Biodiversity Framework</u> (GBF) was adopted, of which 2 targets of the 23 targets are gender specific. Target 22 relates to indigenous people's engagement and target 23 on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the GBF.

In summary Ms. Collantes shared how the GEF Policy on Gender Equality is a catalyst for the greater inclusion of gender-responsive approaches in environmental projects. The policy prominently acknowledges women as partners and beneficiaries in environmental initiatives. It also provides gender-related guidance to implementing agencies in project development, as well as in reporting and monitoring.

Gender Mainstreaming in the UNODC Project Cycle

Ms. Marian Salema, Programme Officer, UNODC focused her presentation on UNODC's gender mainstreaming project cycle and the entity's journey in developing their initial Gender Strategy, which concluded in 2018. The second iteration of the <u>UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</u> includes an intersectional approach and was launched in June 2022.

Ms. Salema expressed her appreciation for the invaluable contributions of the UN-SWAP 2.0, which gave UNODC the impetus to develop its own gender strategy, as well as other gender-related tools for the organization. She also noted the importance of their internal gender strategy focal point network in offering support and providing learning opportunities for the said gender focal points. She explained that UNODC has two main gender-related goals – (1) gender mainstreaming with a primary focus on supporting Member States, and (2) advancing gender parity, aligned with the UN-SWAP and the entity's gender parity strategy.

UNODC's gender mainstreaming tools include guidance notes and thematic briefs intended to illustrate the inter-relationship between gender equality and women's empowerment issues and transnational organized crime, drug-related policies, counterterrorism and corruption. The thematic briefs cover the areas of corruption, health and livelihoods, justice, organized crime and illicit trafficking and terrorism. To strengthen capacity building on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, UNODC partnered with UN Women to develop an "I Know Gender" training module which focused on their mandated areas of work.

¹ The GEF is a global partnership and is known as the largest environmental multi-donor trust fund in the world with 18 implementing agencies, which include UN organizations, development banks and NGOs in the environmental field. It was initially created to support implementation of the 1992 Rio Convention, and it currently constitutes the financial mechanism of five international conventions.

Global contract for inclusive social justice

Ms. Emanuela Pozzan, Senior Gender Specialist, ILO, focused her presentation on the care economy, highlighting that it continues to gain importance on the global agenda, considering its potential to generate more than 300 million jobs by 2030. While the care economy can contribute to building thriving economies and societies by generating jobs, it important to recall that it relieves the vast care burden traditionally placed on women and girls.

The ILO has developed the <u>5R Framework for Decent Care Work</u>, which focuses on efforts to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, while representing and rewarding care workers. Ms. Pozzan also shared that the topic of climate change and <u>Just Transition</u> can be connected to the care economy discourse because careful consideration of macroeconomic and social protection policies provide a great opportunity to advocate for more investments into the care economy.

In closing, Ms. Pozzan also emphasized that in the context of the priority theme for CSW-67 and guided by the ILO's Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work, ICT facilitated gender-based violence was an emerging area which the UN system should pay particular attention to.

Gender Equality at UNESCO

Ms. Begoña Lasagabaster, Director for Gender Equality, UNESCO, updated the Network on UNESCO's gender equality work which is a global priority for the organization. In her opening remarks, Ms. Lasagabaster emphasized that the pandemic has exposed serious risks of irrevocable damage to the gender equality agenda, noting that at the current rate of progress, it is unlikely that the global gender gap will close within our lifetime. In the context of the CSW-67 priority theme, she noted that the evolving digital global context also necessitates the identification and development of new solutions, and coordinated action across UNESCO's mandate, especially to address the rise of online violence against women journalists, artists, researchers, scientists, and educators.

Through its <u>Medium-Term Strategy</u> (2022-2029), UNESCO has set four global priorities relevant to gender equality:

- 1. Promoting gender equality in and through education by providing safe and healthy environments, access to education, and curricula that integrate gender perspectives.
- Empowering women in the fields of science, technology, and innovation by advancing women's careers, promoting role models, and providing mentors to empower women in the management of natural and cultural resources for climate action.
- 3. Addressing gender-based violence, discrimination and stereotypes, and improving economic and social inequalities.
- 4. Reducing the digital gender divide by setting and implementing global standards and norms that empower women and girls with digital skills and competencies, giving visibility and promoting women in leadership positions, and addressing gender bias in digital technologies and AI systems.

On the digital gender divide, UNESCO intends to develop a policy brief on generative artificial intelligence (AI) and gender bias within data that looks at the effects of AI on the working lives of women.

During UNESCO's General Conference of 2021, Members States approved a <u>Recommendation on the Ethics of AI</u>, which constitutes the first global standard-setting instrument on the subject.

Ms. Lasagabaster concluded by recommending that the Network considers joint work or products to promote access to education in the digital era, promote women in science, and ensure that the progress made offline to advance gender equality is maintained online.

Session V: IANWGE Working Groups

The objective of this session was (1) to provide an update on the ongoing 2021-2022 Working Group on Intersectionality, and (2) to discuss proposed working groups for 2023-24 on salient topics that may strengthen the Network's contributions to advancing gender equality work across the system. The session was moderated by UN Women and included break out group discussions followed by plenary presentations on proposed 2023 Working Groups.

Ms. Evelyn Boy-Mena, Technical Officer on Gender, WHO, gave an update on the ongoing Working Group on Intersectionality. This Working Group is co-led by UNODC and WHO, and its membership includes DGACM, FAO, ICSC, IOM, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNOCT, UNIRISC, and WIPO. The Working Group successfully raised funds in 2022 to contract an expert consultant who is leading the development of an Guidance Note on Gender Analysis and Mainstreaming with an Intersectional Perspective. This Guidance Note is expected to be finalized by the end of 2023.

A break-out session to discuss proposed new Working Groups for 2023-24 followed. The following 4 groups were proposed:

- a. Working Group on Gender Architecture to develop clear gender architecture standards relevant to the UN system, particularly on the meaning of a 'fully resourced' gender equality unit. Co-leads UN Women and UNEP. Initial members UNV, ECLAC, ICSC. Contact Priya Alvarez (priya.alvarez@unwomen.org) and Raymond Brandes (raymond.brandes@un.org).
- b. Working Group on Forward Influencing and Advocacy to develop inputs on behalf of IANWGE to upcoming high-level summits. Co-leads IOM and UN-Habitat. Contact Angela Mwai (angela.mwai@un.org) and Amira Nassim (anassim@iom.int).
- c. Working Group on Masculinities to engage men and boys to advance gender equality. Co-leads UNESCO and UNDP. Contact Begona Lasagabaster (mb.lasagabaster@unesco.org with cc to mj.brocard@unesco.org) and Brinda Gangopadhya Lundmark (brinda.gangopadhya.lundmark@undp.org).
- d. **Working Group on CSW-68** to develop contributions from IANWGE to CSW-68 which has as its priority theme *addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective*. Co-leads ILO and IFAD. Contact Emanuela Pozzan (<u>pozzan@ilo.org pozzan@ilo.org</u>) and Ndaya Beltchika (<u>n.beltchika@ifad.org</u>)

Additional Session: Gender Equality Marker

This additional session, which was led by Ms. Donna Grimwade, Deputy Director of Financial Management, UN Women, reflected on how to effectively implement gender mainstreaming through the gender equality marker (GEM) in the UN system. The GEM has recently been included as the 7th standard in the Secretary-General's UN Data Cube standards, which are the standards that all UN entities need to report against every year.

Ms. Grimwade detailed a history of the GEM since the Secretary-General called for its development in 2009, including the role that the UN-SWAP's indicators for budget and tracking of expenditure played in its uptake since 2012, and the key CEB publications authored by the 2014 Finance and Budget Network Working Group on Gender Markers. In 2018, the Secretary-General's High-Level Taskforce on Financing for Gender Equality, co-chaired by UN Women's former Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, resulted in the successful inclusion of GEMs in the UN system.

She emphasised that this achievement was illustrative of the importance of joint UN system collaboration and advocacy. This milestone consequently enabled the successful implementation of the GEM in the second round of inputs for the COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund. In 2021, the QCPR monitoring framework included key recommendations on the GEM and set financial targets of at least 15% for UN entities, UNCTs and inter-agency pooled funds. Commendably, the GEM has also been enshrined in the Secretary General's CEB annual requirements for entity reporting.

In conclusion, Ms. Grimwade reminded that as of 01 January 2023, there is a new Reporting Standard VII on the UN GEM with a transitionary period until 31 December 2025. This introduces a common methodology and format for tracking UN activities in support of advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and women's rights across the system. This standard will be mandatory from 01 January 2026 for reporting to OECD, IATI and Pooled Funds database.

Session VI: Capacity building on gender mainstreaming in the UN System

The purpose of the session was to collectively explore what an effective gender equality capacity development system within the UN system would look like. Participatory break-out group exercises explored the capacity needs of different audiences at HQ, Regional and Country levels. The session was led by Dr. Lucy Ferguson, Expert Trainer, and was moderated by Ms. Groves.

One of the key recommendations of the <u>2022 Secretary-General's Report</u> on "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in all Policies and Programmes of the UN system" was to increase investment in capacity development for gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Dr. Ferguson noted that UN-SWAP implementation has shown that ongoing mandatory training on gender equality, including for senior managers, is a key driver of change and results in a bigger likelihood of the entity meeting other gender equality goals and performance indicators.

Dr. Ferguson subsequently discussed capacity development for gender mainstreaming in the UN system through the lens of two key frameworks – (1) the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), and (2) the UN-SWAP. As many IANWGE members know, the former refers to capacity development in

relation to 12 critical areas of concern, while the latter incorporates two specific indicators on capacity assessment and capacity development. While there is a big focus on training and capacity in the BPfA and UN-SWAP 2.0, there has also been a notable decline in gender-transformative approaches to training and capacity development since 2005, in favour of more transitional and instrumental approaches. A 2020 Report on a Review of Training for Gender Equality in the BPfA Review Process found the following:

- Beijing +5 Review Strong focus on transformational gender training, gender-sensitive training and gender mainstreaming.
- Beijing +10 Review Training used widely as a tool for gender transformative change through gender mainstreaming; specific gender budgets allocated; institutional mechanism strengthened at HQ, national and regional levels.
- Beijing +15 Review Training continued to be emphasized as a key component of gender equality actions worldwide. The gender mainstreaming framework, with the overarching goal of transforming individuals, institutions and societies is still being used.
- Beijing + 20 Review Raised concerns about institutional mechanisms that are available, including funding, resources, and technical expertise. This Review focused on moving from transformative approaches within the context of gender and mainstreaming to more transactional and instrumental approaches to training within the critical areas of concern.
- Beijing +25 Review Training is considered a primarily transactional and instrumental tool for achieving other gender-transformative goals, rather than being an end goal in and of itself. This Review also raised concerns that institutional mechanisms for capacity building and training are largely being neglected.

The three takeaways from this report are that: (1) training moves from transformative to transactional; (2) it becomes less important within the overall gender equality agenda; and (3) there are declining institutional mechanisms for capacity development.

Broadly, Dr. Ferguson noted that some of the main challenges for capacity assessment are lack of capacity and technical expertise; limited resources for capacity development; limited senior management support and limited knowledge on how to engage staff in the process and multiple capacity needs outside of gender mainstreaming.

Following Dr. Ferguson's presentation, IANWGE members undertook group work to share ideas and reflections on the ways in which capacity development and assessment can be improved within their respective entities. The feedback from the group discussions included the following suggestions:

- Ensure that capacity development trainings are mandate-specific and tailored to the thematic areas that entities work in.
- Ensure that trainings are practical and applicable to everyday work.
- Make trainings more attractive for staff members i.e., offer incentives for staff members to undertake trainings.
- Build accountability mechanisms to encourage entities to participate in trainings.
- Ensure that senior leadership is committed to feminist principles in practice, including in trainings and learning approaches.

- Consider whether the gender equality marker can be applied to all budgets, such as internal gender unit budgets, to earmark funds for training versus limiting it to only broader projects and programme spending.
- Make it mandatory for entities to create an enabling environment and offer targeted and tailored in-person training programs.

Based on the above reflections, the members shared a list of ways in which the IANGWE Secretariat could further support them (obtained through voting via Mentimeter and listed in order of preference):

- Develop a list of trainers on specific topic areas.
- Develop an online space for sharing of training related good practices and resources.
- Connect gender focal points and circulate their bios.
- Organize a heads of entity level meeting on gender mainstreaming.
- Share best practices and most effective training methods.
- Share information on how to secure funding for trainings.
- Share information creatively through podcasts/audio files etc.
- Share information on successful examples of incentives for training.

In response to these suggestions and resources permitting, the Secretary committed to IANWGE members that in the coming year the IANWGE Secretariat would (i) develop and circulate a list of IANWGE focal point bios, and (ii) initiate the coordination and compilation of a list of trainers on specific topic areas, to be supplemented by IANWGE members. The Secretariat would also explore the feasibility of some of the other suggestions.

Session VII: Pivoting to the field - The role of global inter-agency coordination mechanisms in collectively supporting gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda

The purpose of the session was to facilitate a discussion on existing gender-specific inter-agency mechanisms to support the gender-responsive implementation of the SDGs. The session was moderated by Ms. Emanuela Pozzan, Senior Gender Specialist, ILO and featured a presentation by Leyla Sharafi, Senior Advisor, UNFPA.

Ms. Sharafi started her presentation by providing a background on the history of the UN Gender Equality Network (UN GEN). UN GEN was created in 2022 following the end of the UNSDG Gender Equality Task Force. UN GEN in particular:

- Contributes to strengthening gender mainstreaming and strategic results across the 2030 Agenda and the UNDS Reform process.
- Advocates for a stronger gender equality agenda within the UN system, particularly at the regional level
- Facilitates information sharing, including lessons learnt and strategic planning, among UN agencies.
- Influences UNSDG priorities as needed such as regional and UNCT engagement; capacity development and knowledge management.

• Is co-chaired by UNFPA and UN Women, in partnership with DCO.

UN GEN's specific time-bound deliverables include:

- Launching and disseminating the UNSDG Gender Theme Groups (GTG) Standard Operating Procedures.
- Updating the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard to align with the UNDS new guidance products and frameworks i.e., MAF, companion pieces.
- Updating the UNSDG Resource Book for Mainstreaming Gender in UN Common Programming at the Country Level, which will contribute to the effective mainstreaming of gender considerations in CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks.
- Updating the UNCT Gender Equality Marker Guidance Note in line with system-wide priorities and the implementation plan of the recommendations for UNCTs emanating from the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality.

Further, UN GEN's annual workplan aims to strengthen the sharing of knowledge and data (through a compilation of good practices across regions for instance) and contribute to UNSDG priorities such as system-wide results reporting on UN contribution to the SDG inclusive gender mainstreaming; dissemination of a new UNSDG Joint Programme Guidance; supporting the cohesive implementation of relevant Secretary-General's Strategies (e.g. The UN System-Wide Framework of the Strategies on the Environment, SG's Call to Action on Human Rights, SG's Data Strategy, SG's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, UN Youth 2023 Strategy, UN Disability Inclusion Strategy).

In conclusion, it was underscored that the Cooperation Frameworks and CCAs can be used as strategic entry points for strengthening the gender architecture and advancing gender equality within UNCTs.

Session VIII: Interactive dialogue with Deputy Executive Director, UN Women on Gender Markers

The purpose of this session was to facilitate a dialogue with Ms. Anita Bhatia, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women on the inclusion of gender markers in the UN's pooled funding mechanisms. The session was moderated by Ms. Mehrotra, the Secretary of IANWGE.

Ms. Mehrotra introduced the session by highlighting the invaluable contribution of members to help realise the gender equality marker as a UN data standard. She appreciated Ms. Bhatia's consistent support for the marker and including its implementation in the COVID-19 MPTF.

Ms. Bhatia began by acknowledging and appreciating the work and support of IANWGE in relation to the work on the gender marker. She noted the significance and value-addition of a joint partnership perspective which IANWGE brings to the table. In particular, she noted that the collective strength and synergies enjoyed through IANWGE are important in building resilient forms of work in pursuit of accelerated efforts towards the gender-responsive implementation of the SDGs.

Ms. Bhatia highlighted that SDG 5 faces significant challenges today with heavy pushbacks against women's rights and gender equality in certain parts of the world. Ms. Bhatia therefore emphasized the

critical role of expanding partnerships with international financial institutions, think tanks, civil society, and the private sector to create transformative change.

Following Ms. Bhatia's presentation, members of the Network engaged with her in a Q&A session, resulting in the following key takeaways:

- The private sector is an important partner in global development and has a significant role to play in helping the development community achieve common goals and targets.
- The implementation of the gender marker leaves room for contextualisation given the range of sectors that entities are carrying out projects/programs – for example, it may be applied to the humanitarian context.
- It is important for UN system entities to engage with faith-based organisations, considering how much faith is a driver of action, particularly on gender issues.

Session IX: Updates from Generation Equality

The aim of the session was to provide an update on Generation Equality. The session was moderated by Ms. Groves and featured a presentation by Mr. Ziad Sheikh, Special Advisor to Executive Director for Generation Equality, UN Women.

Mr. Sheikh introduced his presentation by giving context to the role of the UN system in Generation Equality. He appreciated that since its launch in July 2021, different parts of the UN family have concretely supported <u>Generation Equality</u> either as a leader of one of the <u>Action Coalitions</u> and/or as commitment makers in the programmatic policy, advocacy, or financial sectors. Other parts of the UN system are serving as members of the muti-stakeholder leadership group, which is an advisory body to UN Women in its role as convener of Generation Equality. Specific references to Generation Equality have also been included in the strategic plans of different parts of the UN system.

Following its successful launch, Generation Equality commitments have grown from an initial 1000 at its launch, to 2700 commitments to date, from more than 1100 commitment makers from civil society, Member States, philanthropy, the private sector, and the UN system.

The first <u>Accountability Report for Generation Equality, which</u> was launched during the 2022 General Assembly, provides some initial evidence of the actions being taken to implement these commitments. A snapshot of the report shows that:

- 83% of reported commitments reflected strong alignment with the Action Coalitions' blueprint targets;
- o 60% of reported commitments have provided clear existence of progress ranging from concrete outputs to quantified impact; and
- Close to 80% of reported commitments are currently being implemented.

In relation to UN system, efforts are currently building upon the existing engagement by the UN family to (i) increase the number of UN system entities that are concretely engaged in Generation Equality, either through an action coalition leader or a commitment maker, and (ii) to successfully replicate the global model of multi-stakeholder platforms at the local level.

The Midpoint Moment in September 2023 will mark the first major, public-facing event of Generation Equality since the Paris Forum, and will offer a deliberate opportunity to align with the <u>SDGs Midpoint Summit</u>. The occasion will bring together different constituencies and offer an opportunity to spotlight accountability and push for an expansion of engagement and support across all sectors; galvanize transformative new commitments that address geographic and thematic gaps and align with the SDG Summit to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

The subsequent Q&A highlighted the need to further invest in the strengths, capacities and resources of the constituencies and support all available opportunities to engage in the co-design, decision-making and accountability to enhance implementation of commitments. Ensuring that principals from IANWGE member entities are ready to report against commitments made, either individually or collectively was also discussed.

Session X: Wrap-up and any other business

The meeting concluded with a brief but positive Mentimeter evaluation of the 2023 IANWGE Annual Meeting. The Mentimeter findings revealed that members appreciated the opportunity to renew connections and solidarity with like-minded colleagues. The opportunity to learn, interact and gain fresh insights was also highlighted. Further members also expressed their support for continuing with the resumed in-person format for the 2024 annual meeting.

In her closing remarks, the Secretary noted that the agenda for this year's annual meeting was ambitious. She encouraged the Network to meaningfully contribute to Our Common Agenda and its related high-level processes discussed at the meeting to ensure that gender equality is at the forefront of these systemwide developments. The session on CSW-67 similarly provided the Network with key insights into the emerging issues on the priority theme and importantly, on the status of negotiations of the Agreed Conclusions which members were encouraged to widely share within their entities.

The Secretary reiterated the message from the Chair about the enduring importance of the Network. She further expressed her deepest appreciation to members for the continued solidarity in driving the system towards common gender equality goals. In this context, she the noted the relevance of the IANWGE working groups and encouraged members to continue to collaborate through this mechanism on issues of joint interest. As next steps the Secretary noted:

• The IANWGE Secretariat will follow-up with members on the constitution of the four proposed working groups namely (i) Working Group on Gender Architecture (ii) Working Group on Forward Influencing and Advocacy (iii) Working Group on Masculinities (iv) Working Group on CSW-68. A sign-up date will be provided and members are strongly encouraged to join the working group of their choice to drive the work of the Network in 2023-'24.

In closing, the Secretary emphasized the importance of the human connection in undertaking gender equality work, and sincerely appreciated the in-person attendance of so many members during the annual meeting. She went onto thank all presenters, including members, for their engaging presentations during the meeting. She also thanked members for volunteering to moderate sessions and actively participating in the discussions over the course of the meeting.

The Secretary conveyed her sincere gratitude to Ms. Groves for her engaging facilitation of the agenda over the two days. She also expressed her appreciation to UN Women staff for organizing the annual session and called the meeting to a close.

Annex 1: Annual Session Agenda

empowerment of all women and girls

DAY ONE							
Tuesday, 14 March 202	23						
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Arrival: 19th Floor Conference Room, UN Women						
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Welcome and Introductions						
	Adoption of Agenda – Aparna Mehrotra, Secretary of IANWGE	,					
	it: Our Common Agenda, upcoming high-level Summits and le empowerment of women	linkages with					
10:00 am – 11:15 am	 Objective: Briefing and discussion on upcoming strategic high-level events linked to Our Common Agenda, including the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future, and related implications for the UN System's work on gender equality. Identify opportunities for IANWGE to contribute to these Summits and Our Common Agenda processes. Methodology: Moderated Panel Discussion with Questions and Answers Speakers: Michèle Griffin, the Director of the Common Agenda Team, EOSG Marion Barthelemy, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination, DESA Table Reflection Exercise: What stands out for each of you from this conversation? What are the implications of this content for you and your entity? 	Moderator Leslie Groves, Trainer and Facilitator					
11:15 am – 11:30 am	 2. Do you have any questions for our speakers? 3. What can IANWGE do to contribute to Our Common Agenda and the upcoming high-level Summits? Coffee Break 						

technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the

11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Objective: Update on the status of negotiations of the CSW-67 Agreed Conclusions under the priority theme Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the and key issues emerging therein Methodology: Briefing with Questions and Answers Speaker: Sarah Hendriks, Director, Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division, UN Women	Moderator Sharon J. Taylor, UN Women
Session III: Remarks b Director, UN Women	y Ms. Sima Bahous, IANWGE Chair, Under-Secretary-Gene	ral and Executive
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	Remarks by Ms. Sima Bahous, Chair of IANWGE, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women and engagement with IANWGE members.	Moderator Angela Mwai, UN-Habitat
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm	LUNCH BREAK	
Session IV: Thematic	and Emerging Issues of System-Wide Relevance	
1:45 pm – 3:15 pm	Objective: Exchange by IANWGE members of emergent issues and good practices relevant to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the UN system. Methodology: Presentation and plenary discussion Speakers: Begoña Lasagabaster, UNESCO Verona Collantes, Global Environment Facility (GEF) Emanuela Pozzan, ILO Marian Salema, UNODC	Moderator Fleur Newman, UNFCCC
3:15 pm – 3:45 pm	Coffee Break and Networking	
Session V: IANWGE V	Vorking Groups	
3:45 pm – 5:00 pm	Objective: Update on 2021-2022 Working Groups and discussion on proposed 2023 working groups Methodology: Plenary discussion on ongoing and newly proposed working group topics. Proposal of and introduction of any additional WGs by members.	Moderator Leslie Groves, Trainer and Facilitator
Close of Day One		

DAY TWO		
Wednesday, March 15	5 2023	
8:30 am –9:00 am	Arrival	
Session VI: Conneity k	building on gender mainstreaming in the UN System	
Session v1. Capacity	ounding on gender manistreaming in the ON System	
9:00 am – 11:00 am	<u>Objective:</u> Interactive discussion on effective gender equality capacity development within the UN system.	Moderator Leslie Groves, Trainer and
	Methodology: Presentation on a recent UN Women review of capacity development assessments and plans in the UN system. Participatory break out group exercises to explore capacity needs of different audiences at HQ, Regional and Country levels and to identify creative and innovative solutions whilst building accountability for capacity development on gender equality within the UN.	Facilitator
	Speaker: Lucy Ferguson, Expert Trainer (remote)	
11:00 am – 11:15 am	Coffee Break	
0	to the field - The role of global inter-agency coordination mechanism ponsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda	ns in collectively
11:15 am – 12:00 pm	<u>Objective:</u> Discussion on existing gender-specific inter-agency mechanisms to support gender responsive implementation of the SDGs.	Moderator Emanuela Pozzan, ILO
	Methodology: Presentation and plenary discussion	
	<u>Speaker:</u> Leyla Sharafi, Senior Gender Advisor, UNFPA	
Session VIII: Interacti	ive dialogue with Deputy Executive Director, UN Women on the imp	ortance of
	kers in pooled funding mechanisms	
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	<u>Objective:</u> Interactive dialogue on the inclusion of gender markers in the UN's pooled funding mechanisms	Moderator Leslie Groves, External
	<u>Methodology</u> : Presentation and plenary discussion	Facilitator
	Speaker: Anita Bhatia, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women	
Session IX: Updates fr	rom Generation Equality	

12:30 pm – 12:50 pm	Objective: Provide an update on Generation Equality	Moderator Leslie Groves,
	Methodology: Briefing with Questions and Answers	External Facilitator
	<u>Speaker:</u>	
	Ziad Sheikh, Advisor, UN Women	
Session X: Wrap-up a	nd any other business	
12:50 pm – 1:20 pm	Evaluation	Moderator
	Wrap-up exercise: takeaway for you and for the collective	Leslie Groves,
	Wrap-up by Secretary and close	External
		Facilitator
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Network group lunch at Allora restaurant.	
Close of Meeting		

Annex 3: List of Participants

Name	Title	UN Entity	Location	Email	In- person/ Remote
Li Zhou	Programme Management Officer	CEB Secretari at	New York, USA	zhou17@un.org	In-person
Diana Rodriguez	Social Affairs Officer	ECLAC	Santiago, Chile	diana.rodriguez@cepal.org	In-person
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