

## Management perspective to the report on the corporate thematic evaluation of UN-Women’s support to women’s political participation: Insights from the field Executive Board Annual Session 2024

### Management Perspective to the Corporate Evaluation UN-Women’s Support to Women’s Political Participation: Insights from the Field June 2024

UN-Women expresses its appreciation for the Corporate Evaluation on *UN-Women’s Support to Women’s Political Participation: Insights from the field*, which assesses the entity’s cumulative contribution to women’s political participation (WPP), and results achieved during the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021 period, and additional insights beyond. The evaluation considers the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of UN-Women’s work on WPP with a focus on insights from the country level, based on document review and consultations with stakeholders, partner agencies and UN-Women staff. The evaluation arrives within the second year of UN-Women’s Strategic Plan 2022-2025, affording an opportunity to address its conclusions and recommendations in the new Strategic Plan’s implementation. The evaluation’s drafting also overlapped with the finalization of the Gender Equality Accelerator on WPP and a new global programme on women’s political participation, launched in March 2024, which in parallel address some of the recommendations in this report. In addition to those listed in the evaluation Report, UN-Women also wishes to acknowledge the support of the Political Participation Policy team throughout the evaluation process.

UN-Women’s efforts to advance women’s political participation include promoting supportive legislative and institutional reforms; building the capacity of women political aspirants and leaders; monitoring, preventing and mitigating violence against women in politics; and encouraging social norms change to recognize women’s political leadership. UN-Women is also actively engaged in promoting women’s political participation through coordination and advocacy efforts across the UN system, including with the Inter-Agency Task Force on Temporary Special Measures and the Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism on Electoral Assistance. UN-Women is pleased that the evaluation viewed UN-Women’s work well adapted to various country contexts, while remaining strategically focused on accelerators of WPP in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders across government, women’s networks, UN partners and civil society organizations to support the Entity’s initiatives related to women’s political participation. Overall, UN-Women’s efforts related to women’s political participation have generated progress in strengthening electoral frameworks and developing and sustaining a diverse cadre of women political leaders. This impact is largely due to sustained investments in legal reforms, advocacy and strengthening of women’s skills as office holders and leaders and increasing capacities at all stages of their path into politics. UN-Women’s country-level programmes have also received useful and timely support from headquarters and several Regional Offices on matters related to women’s political participation.

Nevertheless, UN-Women continues to encounter challenges to advancing women’s political participation and the evaluation presents recommendations that the Entity could consider, including strengthening its advocacy, convening and gender mainstreaming roles in political participation programming at country level, strengthening guidance on effectively mainstreaming considerations of leave no one behind and improving measurement of key results to better contextualize and demonstrate UN-Women’s impact. As UN-Women strives to enhance its

structure, capacity, and capability to impact on the lives of women and girls who are left behind, it takes note of the challenges cited in the evaluation and will seek to address them. These considerations, and the evaluation’s recommendations and observations, will inform UN-Women’s WPP work and assessment of its impact on women’s lives around the world. The management response refers to the entire evaluation and notes that some recommendations will have resource implications.

**Recommendation 1: UN-Women should continue to address key barriers to women’s political participation, while including a focus on persistent constraints and forms of backlash such as violence against women in politics**

**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

UN-Women welcomes the recommendation to continue addressing key longstanding barriers to women’s political participation, while focusing on backlash and violence against women in politics, noting this was a key priority in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. This work supports intergovernmental and UN coordination mandates, but notably prioritizes our operation mandate through country offices’ programmes to mitigate VAWP through advocating for legislative and policy reforms; research and data collection; support for monitoring and prevention; capacity-building of women in politics and national partners including in the security sector and the judiciary; advocacy with women’s organizations; and strengthening complaints and reporting mechanisms. These initiatives continue to be prioritized under outcome 5 of the current Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and are foundational in the framework in Gender Equality Accelerator 1. UN-Women will continue expanding comparative prevalence data on VAWP through tailored surveys at national level, ensuring consistency with existing international statistical guidelines to build a global repository of statistically reliable and comparable data. UN-Women is also preparing relevant guidance, including on National Gender Observatories and VAWP monitoring, which will aid Regional and Country Offices, other UN agencies, and development partners in addressing this issue.

UN-Women has led UN system-wide coordination and awareness-raising among senior UN leadership about the impacts of VAWP, successfully advocating for the adoption of UN System Key Messages on VAWP endorsed in the Secretary-General’s Executive Committee. UN-Women will continue to advocate for use of the Key Messages on VAWP by senior UN officials with national partners at country level, as well as more closely within UN-Women through global advocacy, corporate messaging and communications materials. In response to ongoing the backlash, in 2024 and beyond, UN-Women is prioritizing combatting technology facilitated gender-based violence, with coordinated action between WPP and Ending Violence against Women teams, with the aim of strengthening partnerships with relevant organizations to advocate on the issue and develop comprehensive programme responses, including online training programmes such as Social Media Self Defence trainings. Some regional offices are preparing e-training modules on cyber-security and online safety for women in public life including women activists, human rights defenders, and journalists.

UN-Women will also strengthen capacity building of women leaders to address enduring challenges they face in their political roles. Building the successful candidate training manual which was widely rolled out at

**Accepted**

country level in all regions in the evaluation period under review, UN-Women is developing a new complementary curriculum to help capacitate and empower newly women leaders including to address VAWP and TFGBV.					
Key Action (s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit (s)		Tracking	Comments
		Lead	Support	Status	
Country offices strengthen implementation of evidence-based programming to prevent, monitor and mitigate VAWP, with increased attention to TFGBV	2024-2025	COs	ROs and Governance and Participation Section/PPID	Ongoing	
In coordination with EVAW section, WPP team strengthens linkages in the increasing area of TFGBV	Q3 2024	Governance and Participation Section/PPID		Ongoing	
Country offices to strengthen capacity building of women in public life, including through roll out of VAWP and TFGBV prevention modules, and e-training on cyber security	2025	COs	ROs and Governance and Participation Section/PPID	Initiated	
Country and Regional offices continue to support roll out of national prevalence surveys on VAWP	2024-2025	COs/ROs/ Governance and Participation Section/PPID		Ongoing	
Develop knowledge on financial resources barriers and opportunities for funding women in politics	2025	Governance and Participation Section/PPID		Not initiated	
Induction training course for women office holders addresses VAWP and TFGBV and implemented.	Q4 2024/2025	Governance and Participation Section/PPID	ROs	Ongoing	
<b>Recommendation 2: UN-Women should strengthen its advocacy and convening role by providing further guidance on navigating and communicating with diverse coalitions of partners in support of women’s political participation.</b>					
<b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b>				<b>Accepted</b>	
UN-Women agrees with this recommendation and the need to strengthen advocacy and communications with diverse partners in support of women’s political participation. While noting that UN-Women does already work with range of stakeholders at country and regional level, there is scope to strengthen advocacy with a broader range of partners, such as multi-party international foundations, parliamentary groups, local					

governments and associations, youth and disabled groups, and political parties and political party registrars, as appropriate.					
UN-Women’s recently launched programme within the European Union’s <i>Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative (WYDE)</i> <sup>1</sup> will also help foster networks among diverse women leaders, feminists, and young women in response to this recommendation. The programme will support the implementation of the Gender Equality Forum (GEF) Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership (AC6), through financial support to young women’s organizations and feminist networks, and enhance synergies between women’s rights movements, member states, decision-makers, the international community, the media, and other key actors to strengthen coalition building, advocacy, and campaigning to promote WPP.					
To support advocacy for a key normative priority - the new CEDAW General Recommendation No 40 focused on parity between women and men in decision making systems - to be adopted in October 2024, <sup>2</sup> and the implementation of the WYDE Programme, UN-Women will develop communications and advocacy plans that will serve to inform policy-oriented advocacy, UN programming at regional and country levels and support donor outreach and UN coordination.					
Key Action (s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit (s)		Tracking Status	Comments
		Lead	Support		
Develop communications and advocacy plan on WPP, including with UN and external partners, and diverse stakeholders.	2024-2025	Comms, Governance and Participation Section/PPID, ROs	COs	Not initiated/not resourced	
Strengthen advocacy with a broader range of national partners, such as multi-party international foundations, youth and disabled groups, local governments and associations, and political parties and political party registrars, as appropriate	2024-2025	COs	ROs, Governance and Participation Section/PPID	Not initiated	

<sup>1</sup> The EU’s €40 million *Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative (WYDE)* launched in 2023, seeks to strengthen the rights, empowerment, and participation in public and political life of youth and women. UN-Women, jointly with International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) will jointly implement the *WYDE | Women’s Leadership Initiative* through the project titled: “*Advancing Women’s Political Participation and Decision-Making through Social Norms Change, Networking and Global Advocacy.*”

<sup>2</sup> During 2023, the CEDAW Committee initiated the elaboration of a new General Recommendation No 40 on *the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems*, to strengthen the implementation women’s right to participation under the Convention. UN-Women has supporting the CEDAW Committee with the elaboration of the new GR No.40 and hosting five regional consultations in collaboration with our regional and country offices.

Showcase good practices of UN coordination on political participation through regional and global COPs and peer to peer exchanges.	Q4/2025	ROs and Governance and Participation Section/PPID	COs	Not initiated	
Implementation of WYDE programme and development of SOPs for disbursement of funds to AC6 grantees	2024-2026	Governance and Participation Section/PPID	ROs	Initiated	
Develop advocacy plan to support multi-partner advocacy of CEDAW GR 40	2024-2025	Governance and Participation Section/PPID, ROs	COs	Not initiated	
<b>Recommendation 3: UN-Women should aim to develop strategic and long-term programmes to support women’s political participation at the country level.</b>					
<b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b>				<b>Accepted</b>	
<p>UN-Women agrees with the recommendation that country offices would benefit from longer-term, strategic planning beyond election cycles, while noting that UN-Women’s strategic plan 2018-2021 provided the framework for country offices to develop multi-year programmes on WPP through their Strategic Notes. Additionally, the roll out of the Flagship Programme Initiative on WPP (FPI 1) encouraged country offices to design multi-stakeholder, multi-year programmes to achieve sustainable changes at scale. It is important to note that in many instances, country offices, often with limited staff resources, were better able to capitalize on opportunistic non-core funding/multi-donor basket funds that are established to support UN joint programming ahead of electoral processes in the short term, notably through UNDP and the Peace Building Fund , which may have supported the perception that COs’ programmes are mostly focused on the short-term election cycle. Following good practices related to the FPI implementation, the subsequent Gender Equality Accelerator 1 on WPP serves as the corporate planning tool for resource mobilization, with its four outcome areas based on the need for longer term programming approaches.</p> <p>To strengthen UN-Women’s coordination role on gender mainstreaming across UN programming on political participation, UN-Women will identify good practices at country level, such as dedicated gender theme groups, elections working groups, electoral needs assessments and integration of gender mainstreaming in UNCT planning documents on governance; and disseminate through regional and global COPs and peer to peer exchanges for replication at country level.</p>					
<b>Key Action (s)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible Unit (s)</b>		<b>Tracking</b>	
		<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>

Country offices adopt long term programming approaches to WPP in Strategic Notes, project documents and joint programmes in alignment with the GEA 1 results framework, with socialization supported by PPID	2024-2025	COs, ROs	Governance and Participation Section/PPID	Ongoing	
Regional offices compile and showcase good practices on long-term fundraising efforts, and based on inputs develop regional planning documents based to assist with long-term fundraising efforts with donors	2024	ROs, COs	Governance and Participation Section/PPID	Initiated	
Showcase good practices of gender mainstreaming in UN programming on political participation through regional and global COPs and peer to peer exchanges.	Q4 2024-2025	Governance and Participation Section/PPID, ROs, COs		2025	
<b>Recommendation 4: UN-Women should strengthen guidance on effectively mainstreaming considerations of leave no one behind into women’s political participation, particularly as programmes scale and work with new partnerships for social norms change.</b>					
<p><b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b></p> <p>UN-Women agrees with this recommendation and the need to strengthen guidance to effectively mainstream leave no one behind considerations into WPP programming, while observing the centrality of LNOB principles in the previous and current strategic plans and GEA 1, providing the basis for programme and monitoring support to women in all their diversity. To address this recommendation, UN-Women will identify and codify good practices and lessons learned on effective programming integrating intersectionality and LNOB principles to assist country offices with evidence-based guidance to advance their work in this area.</p> <p>Regarding incorporation of LNOB principles in training initiatives, UN-Women has produced an addendum to its Political Leadership and Campaign Curriculum manual to include a ‘companion guide for inclusive training,’ providing guidance on building the campaign skills of women with disabilities, LGBTIQ, young and older women, rural and Indigenous women, mothers and single women, and women belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. UN-Women will strengthen implementation of the guidance offered on planning inclusive training events, as well as candidate-specific guidance on running an inclusive campaign, at country level. The principles contained in the guide are easily adaptable to inform country programmes and advocacy initiatives. Some regions have developed dedicated training tools for youth, men and women with disabilities, and these initiatives will be shared among regions through the global COP.</p> <p>Regarding social norms change, the Gender Equality Accelerator on WPP includes a dedicated outcome 3: <i>“Both men and women adopt attitudes, norms and practices that advance gender equality and promote the</i></p>				<p><b>Accepted</b></p>	

<p><i>perception of women as legitimate and effective political leaders,” aligned with the Strategic Plan (2022-2025) systemic Outcome 3, and which provides the corporate framework to transform harmful stereotypes and discriminatory norms against women and girls across sectors.</i></p> <p>As part of the design of the new WYDE global programme on WPP, a key activity will be the development of a common global definition and understanding of harmful social norms and manifestations that hamper women’s political participation and identify key levers to mitigate them. This will include convening expert meetings and structured dialogues to define the specific social norms hampering WPP to frame the overall programming efforts, training tools and development of guidance for different stakeholders at regional and country level.</p>					
Key Action (s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit (s)		Tracking Status	Comments
		Lead	Support		
Codify good practices on integrating LNOB principles into WPP programming at country level and disseminate through Community of Practice webinars and knowledge products	Q1 2025	ROs, COs	Governance and Participation Section/PPID	In progress	
Strengthen country level implementation of the companion guide for inclusive training for women candidates and leaders, especially those left furthest behind	2024-2025	COs/ Governance and Participation Section/PPID	ROs	In progress	
Convene global expert group meeting and structured dialogues to define the specific social norms hampering WPP, and how they impact on women’s participation in practice, to frame key messages and inform advocacy	Q4 2024	Governance and Participation Section/PPID	ROs	Not initiated	
Develop training tools and guidance on social norms change for implementation at regional and country level through programming interventions.	2025	Governance and Participation Section/PPID, ROs	COs	Not initiated	
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> UN-Women should enhance measurement of key results on women’s political participation to better contextualize and demonstrate the impact of its work at country level.</p>					
<p><b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b></p>				<p><b>Accepted</b></p>	



<p>UN-Women agrees with this recommendation and the need to enhance measurement of key results on women’s political participation to better contextualize and demonstrate the impact of its work at country level. UN-Women has already started strengthening impact reporting as required by the Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) global programme reporting requirements. This has included a fulsome review and reflection on impact level results, achievements and lessons learned over a 10-year period of implementation of the WPP programme, produced in a report. UN-Women will strongly encourage country and regional offices replication to showcase long-term results achieved and document lessons learned for sharing across regions and the organization, including through internal capacity building sessions.</p> <p>In terms of enhancing results reporting, the UN-Women Strategic Plan Mid Term Review process has afforded an opportunity to adjust Strategic Plan Output indicator 0.1.f to streamline measurement of enhanced capacities of national and local legislatures, ministries, and electoral management bodies to design and implement strategies and policies that promote WPP. This will strengthen long-term monitoring on key areas highlighted by this evaluation.</p>					
Key Action (s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit (s)		Tracking Status	Comments
		Lead	Support		
Develop guidance that can be used for rapid impact assessments on WPP at country level	2025	Governance and Participation Section/PPID, ROs	COs	Initiated	
Undertake quality impact assessments on WPP programming at country level and share widely for knowledge sharing and donor outreach	2025	COs, ROs	Governance and Participation Section/PPID	Not initiated	
Ensure strengthened monitoring of the revised SP indicator 0.1.f through global and regional CoPs, to support EDAR reporting on WPP	Q1 2025	Governance and Participation Section/PPID, ROs	COs	Not initiated	