



UN-Women Executive Board
Informal Workshop on the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021
13 February 2017

Background Note

I- Context of the workshop

The development of UN-Women's Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, takes place at an important inflexion point for the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda and for UN-Women. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has reaffirmed the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development both as a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal and as central to the achievement of all SDGs. The extensive 20-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, conducted in 2015, has identified key priorities for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action. The 15-year High-Level Review of Security Council resolution 1325 and the adoption of Security Council resolution 2242 has further deepened and strengthened the women, peace and security agenda. In addition, gender equality perspectives were successfully mainstreamed in a number of sectoral outcomes, thereby strengthening the scope and depth of the gender equality agenda. As the midterm review of UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 noted, attention to the gender equality agenda has never been so high, but women and girls continue to face major obstacles to equal opportunities and outcomes in a global context marked by a number of major challenges.

UN-Women is also at a critical turning point, six years after the start of its operations. Many lessons have been learned since UN-Women's creation and while there have been remarkable accomplishments, challenges remain for the Entity to be in a position to fully deliver on its mandate and bring about transformative change for women and girls. A series of independent assessments and evaluations, as well as the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, have provided major lessons and recommendations to strengthen UN-Women's strategic focus, institutional capacity, and internal systems. These lessons and recommendations will play a key role in informing the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

UN-Women's central role in supporting the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action has been recognized by its Executive Board and the Commission on the Status of Women. UN-Women will need to ensure that the priorities and strategies outlined in its Strategic Plan 2018-2021 provide the Entity with the strategic direction, necessary tools and adequate resources in order to play this role effectively.

In view of this, it will be essential for the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 to include a number of new features and address some fundamental strategic questions for the Entity. First, the new Strategic Plan will need

to ensure a strong alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and demonstrate how UN-Women contributes to ensuring that the entire 2030 Agenda delivers for women and girls. The new Strategic Plan will be anchored in a long-term view of the year 2030 with specific targets set for 2021. Just nine years before the deadline for the achievement of the SDGs, it will be essential for these targets to be ambitious and drive positive change for women and girls.

Second, building on lessons from the current planning cycle, the Strategic Plan will need to clearly identify UN-Women's added value and better articulate the difference that UN-Women makes in women's lives, with a particular focus on those at risk of being left behind. This includes identifying strategic and cost-effective interventions, including the development of innovative partnerships, with the potential to scale up results and break trends which are currently too slow to achieve SDG targets by the year 2030.

Third, the new Strategic Plan will need to articulate how UN-Women can fully leverage its triple mandate of normative support, UN coordination and operational activities in an integrated manner for transformative results. This also includes ensuring that UN-Women can play a key role in promoting UN coherence and Delivering as One UN for women and girls at global, regional and national levels. It should also address UN-Women's efforts to break silos between development, humanitarian action and peace and security in support of better outcomes for women and girls in all contexts.

Finally, the new Strategic Plan will need to strengthen linkages between results and resources. This includes building a more streamlined and accurate results framework while linking it to realistic resource level estimates, building on data available to date, forecasting and on the Structured Dialogue on Financing. These considerations are fully aligned with the guidance of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities for development of the UN system (QCPR), which UN-Women will closely integrate in its Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

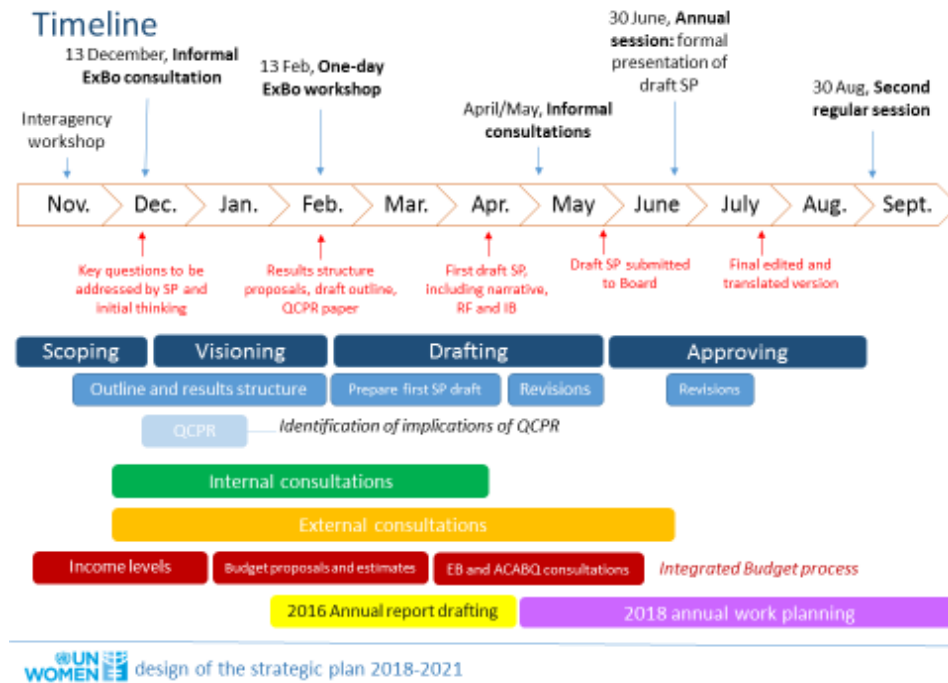
II- Strategic Plan Development Process

In September 2016, UN-Women presented to the Executive Board a [roadmap](#) for the development of the new Strategic Plan. The roadmap emphasized UN-Women's commitment to an inclusive and consultative process with the Executive Board and key stakeholders. In December 2016, UN-Women held an informal meeting with the Executive Board to share some overarching design considerations with the Executive Board. It also provided an updated analysis of the global context and normative developments, as well as some key elements that will inform and provide evidence for the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021.¹

According to the timeline shared with the Executive Board, the workshop to be held on 13 February represents the start of a new phase in the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. It will conclude the scoping and visioning phases, which identified key design considerations and directions for the new Strategic Plan, and mark the start of the drafting phase with preparation of the Strategic Plan narrative and results framework.

In line with UN-Women's commitment to an inclusive process, the informal workshop will follow a process of co-creation, whereby UN-Women will seek the views and inputs of participants to inform its thinking and the development of specific components of the Strategic Plan. In line with this approach, UN-Women will present options and scenarios for discussion, as well as the pros and cons and various considerations.

¹ For reference, documents presented at the informal held on 14 December are available [here](#).



III- Objectives of the informal workshop

The informal workshop has the following objectives:

- To share the latest information and key considerations on the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 with Executive Board members, in particular in light of the recently adopted QCPR resolution;
- To present strategic priorities and their application to the Executive Board for their informal views and inputs;
- To jointly examine various options on the strategies and approaches to be included in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021;
- To discuss the next steps for the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

IV- Key elements

The following elements will inform the content of the informal workshop.

1. Implementing the QCPR guidance in the development of the Strategic Plan

The adoption of the new QCPR in December 2016 provides important guidance to all entities of the UN development system for the strategic focus and direction of their operational activities. UN-Women has

analyzed the implications of the QCPR on the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 in a [conference room paper](#) that was circulated to the Executive Board ahead of its 2017 first regular session. The conference room paper outlines key aspects of the QCPR resolution and how they apply to UN-Women's strategic planning process with particular emphasis on the QCPR's call for greater system-wide coherence, coordination and synergies to drive the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At the informal workshop, UN-Women will provide an overview of the elements included in the paper, which provide a basis for UN-Women's overall strategy and approach. In addition, it will also outline the approach undertaken to foster interagency collaboration amongst other entities currently developing their strategic plans, including in the specific context of ensuring shared responsibility and system-wide coherence in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Discussion questions

- Are any aspects missing or requiring greater emphasis in UN-Women's analysis of the implications of the QCPR on its strategic plan?
- How do Member States assess efforts to date to ensure greater coherence and coordination in the preparation of strategic plans, particularly as it relates to gender equality? What could be additional actions undertaken in this regard?

2. *Developing a new results framework*

The results framework is an essential component of the Strategic Plan. It plays a key role in defining UN-Women priorities and specific contributions to results and supports reporting through specific indicators and targets. In the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, the results framework had two components: (i) a development results framework; and (ii) an organizational effectiveness and efficiency framework. In line with other UN entities, UN-Women will develop and Integrated Results and Resources Framework for its Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

The midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 noted the continued relevance of all of UN-Women's thematic priorities in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Beijing+20. However, there is no doubt that the new results framework will need to more explicitly demonstrate its alignment with the SDGs, while taking on board the lessons and recommendations from Beijing+20. A particular complexity of UN-Women's results framework lies in the composite nature of its mandate and the fact that results are of a different nature and achieved at different levels depending on the type of support provided by UN-Women. While all areas remain relevant, the results structure should be refined. In addition, UN-Women's results framework needs to be streamlined and include more focused outputs and indicators that accurately capture UN Women's contribution to results. The linking of results and resources will be a major consideration, as well as the establishment of annual milestones. Finally, the results framework needs to better capture UN-Women's triple mandate in an integrated manner.

The discussion around the results framework will be divided in two segments. First, participants will be able to review existing thematic priority areas² in a "Knowledge Fair" format. This will allow for an informal discussion around the current results logic of each thematic area, UN-Women's comparative advantage

² The following areas of work will be reviewed: leadership and participation ; economic empowerment ; ending violence against women and girls; women, peace and security and humanitarian action; and governance and national planning.

and key contributions to this area of work, normative and policy developments over the last four years, and the contribution of this area of work to the achievement of the SDGs. Policy experts and Regional Directors will share analysis and concrete examples of UN-Women's work to illustrate and inform discussions. Participants will be encouraged to share their views around specific priorities within each thematic area and how they see UN-Women's comparative advantage and added value in each of them.

Secondly, a more focused plenary discussion will take place around key issues underpinning the possible structures for the results framework. This discussion will examine possible options, key considerations, and seek various viewpoints and opinions on how UN-Women's results should be articulated. This will represent a valuable input for UN-Women as it starts the development of its results framework.

In addition, the Executive Director will discuss her vision for 2021 in the longer-term perspective of the year 2030 in an informal dialogue with workshop participants.

Discussion questions:

- Participants will be encouraged to share their views on each of UN-Women's area of work, specific priorities and UN-Women's comparative advantage within each area;
- Participants will be invited to share their views on the key determinants of UN-Women's results structure; how best to capture results of intergovernmental normative support functions, UN coordination and operational activities in an integrated manner, recognizing the different level of results they produce; the nature of humanitarian work; the definition of output categories; as well as other relevant issues.

3. *Building on evaluation findings*

Evaluation provides systematic evidence on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of UN-Women's work under different areas of Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Through analysis of various areas of strategic plan, evaluation identifies what works well and what could be improved, and what are the lessons and promising practices. In more specific terms, it provides insights on the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategic Plan as a result framework that provides direction and result tracking for all organization. Therefore, it represents a key source of information for the development of the new Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

A series of corporate evaluations, in addition to three meta-analyses, took place during the current Strategic Plan cycle. These evaluations covered the following areas:

- Ending Violence against Women and Girls
- Women's Economic Empowerment
- Peace & Security and Humanitarian Action
- Normative support functions
- Regional architecture
- UN Coordination function
- Strategic Partnership

In addition, an evaluation on women's political participation is currently ongoing.

The Independent Evaluation Office will present an overview of what worked well in the context of the current Strategic Plan and what should be areas of focus for the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 based on evaluation recommendations. It will also provide an overview of the process to develop the new 2018-2021 Corporate Evaluation Plan.

Discussion questions:

- Are some recommendations more pertinent than others? Which recommendations should be prioritized in developing the Strategic Plan?
- Which issues would merit particular attention as part of the new Corporate Evaluation Plan?

4. Preparation of the Integrated Budget

The preparation of UN Women's Integrated Budget 2018-2019 is fully aligned with the development of the new Strategic Plan, as the budget is the financial framework that underpins the Strategic Plan. This is particularly the case in terms of strengthening linkages between results and resources. The Integrated Budget will be developed in line with realistic and ambitious resource envelopes informed by current resource mobilization results and trends. In addition, it will fully take into consideration the cost recovery policy, including the information requested by the Executive Board. UN-Women has looked at possible scenarios for the preparation of the Integrated Budget and will present and discuss those in this session.

Discussion questions:

- Participants will be invited to comment on the approach undertaken by UN-Women for the development of its Integrated Budget.

V- Background documents

All background documents for the informal workshop can be found [here](#).

VI- Next steps

The outcomes of the informal workshop will be summarized in the formal session of the Executive Board on 14 February. Executive Board members will also have an opportunity to summarize their key takeaways and highlight any points of importance to them.

The conclusions of the informal workshop will then inform the drafting of the narrative and results framework of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. A first draft will be circulated to the Executive Board in mid-April for informal feedback. Additional informal meetings and information sessions may be organized as needed throughout the development of the Strategic Plan. The draft will be presented at the Annual Session in June 2017 for formal feedback. The final Strategic Plan 2018-2021 will be presented at the Second Regular Session for the Executive Board's decision.