Management Response to Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN-Women's Contribution to Governance and National Planning May 2019

OVERALL COMMENTS

UN-Women welcomes the findings and recommendations of the Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN-Women's Contribution to Governance and National Planning. The evaluation assesses UN-Women's contribution from 2011 to 2017 to "strengthen the responsiveness of plans and budgets to gender equality at all levels" (Goal 5 of UN-Women Strategic Plan 2011-2013) and to ensure that "governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities" (Impact Area 5 of UN-Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017). Based on extensive document review and consultations with stakeholders, partners and UN-Women staff at Headquarters, Regional Offices and Country Offices, the evaluation presents an assessment of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and lessons to inform future Governance and National Planning (GNP) strategy development, planning and implementation.

UN-Women appreciates the evaluation's recognition of the pioneering role of Unifem and UN-Women over two decades in promoting gender-responsive GNP. It identifies gender-responsive GNP as foundational for achieving gender equality and as an area for UN-Women to leverage its comparative advantage in providing integrated policy support, specifically in the context of United Nations Development System (UNDS) Reform. It recognizes UN-Women's influence and coordination with other UN agencies as supporting integration of and coherence on gender equality in key normative agreements, particularly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The evaluation notes that UN-Women has, through strategic partnerships with ministries of finance, national women's machineries and civil society organizations, successfully enabled government actors to establish and apply gender responsive approaches to policy making, planning and budgeting. It also points to the consistently high-quality technical support provided by UN-Women as contributing to the strong relationship of trust amongst partners and recognizes UN-Women's strength in orienting its GNP work to government partner priorities.

The evaluation allows UN-Women to reflect on main areas of progress, challenges and lessons learned to identify ways to expand and further embed gender responsive GNP in national systems. UN-Women particularly notes with appreciation the evaluation's recommendations to consolidate and strengthen its programme offering, review its contribution on HIV/AIDS, coordination within the UN system and financing among others. UN-Women recognizes that responding to these recommendations will require a refined strategic vision for this area of work, enhanced capacities at all levels, increased linkages between GNP and thematic areas, and improvements in internal systems and knowledge management over the course of implementing the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. UN-Women appreciates that the evaluation recognizes the necessity of additional human and financial resources at all levels to fully implement the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 1: UN-Women to develop an integrated policy and programme package to support national governments with gender-responsive GNP as a central platform.	
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. This recommendation is particularly important in the context of the UNDS Reform which requires the UN system to provide integrated policy support to national governments drawing on the mandates and full assets of the system. GNP, which includes gender analysis and mainstreaming, is the core theme that runs across all thematic areas of UN-Women's work and its normative support, UN coordination and operational functions. The evaluation highlights the need to support national governments across the full cycle of GNP - policy design, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation - while embedding more strongly in thematic areas where support is already provided. It calls too on strengthening capacities of institutional actors - finance and sectoral ministries, national women's machineries, civil society organizations - along the GNP chain. UN-Women's Flagship Programme Initiatives (FPIs) on "Making Every Woman and Girl Count" and "Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" work synergistically to provide the data and evidence to inform national planning and budgeting actions. The	**Accepted**

recommendation is in-line with the FPI Phase 2 envisaged approach to provide an integrated policy and programme support package.				
KEY ACTION	**TIME FRAME**	**RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION**	**STATUS**	**COMMENTS**
Develop evidence-based policy and programme package and corresponding tools on gender-responsive GNP to support UN-Women regional and country offices, as well as UN country teams more broadly, to deliver technical assistance to Member States in this area.	Q4 2019 Q1 2020	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 2: UN-Women to determine the intended relationship between UN-Women's GNP work and its support to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting and take actions to operationalize it within the proposed central platform/integrated package of support to governments.				
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. The evaluation highlighted the area of UN-Women's work on HIV that is specific to integrating gender perspectives in the governance of the HIV response – through gender analysis of national HIV plans, capacity strengthening of institutions responding to HIV, and integrating gender perspectives into HIV monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Increasingly, UN-Women is being called on at the country level to support the HIV response specifically to address gender dimensions across the continuum of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. An internal review of UN-Women's work on HIV within the framework of engagement in the UNAIDS joint programme and the implementation of the UNAIDS Strategy will be undertaken to take stock of the achievements and lessons in areas outside of the GNP-specific work on HIV.			**Accepted**	
KEY ACTION	**TIME FRAME**	**RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION**	**STATUS**	**COMMENTS**
Undertake an internal review of UN-Women's work on HIV to refine the approach, based on its strategic value added. Results of review to be included in an integrated package of support.	Q4 2019	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 3: As part of ongoing UN reform processes, UN-Women to leverage coordinated UN support to national governments on governance and national planning, with UN-Women providing leadership and expertise in the area of gender-responsive GNP.				
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. UN-Women currently participates in several UN Sustainable Development Group working groups and task forces to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment are integrated into the operational guidance and tools for regional and country programming. Through an integrated package of policy and programme support on gender-responsive GNP (see Recommendation 1), UN-Women will support UNCTs in delivering integrated policy support to national governments on			**Accepted**	

governance and national planning.

UN-Women will actively engage in Mainstreaming, Acceleration, Policy Support (MAPS) missions to provide coherent and integrated support on gender analysis of national plans and budgets through UN Country Teams. This may include, technical support on integrating gender equality into national development strategies; identifying financing gaps for delivery on gender equality commitments; and positioning gender equality as an accelerator to development.

In its role as a member of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Design Team, UN-Women has contributed substantively to the draft UNDAF Guidance ensuring its strategic orientation on principles of leaving no one behind (LNOB), gender equality, human rights and resilience. UN-Women has emphasized the importance of mainstreaming these principles across all UNDAF phases and will provide technical support to its country offices to support UNDAF rollout. UNDAF development includes an assessment of available funding and financing needs for implementation. This process needs to be closely aligned with country efforts to develop financing strategies to implement national sustainable development plans. Ensuring that analyses done in the context of the national financing frameworks and the UNDAF inform and support each other will contribute to increased coherence and harmonization of UNDS technical and policy support to countries.

KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Prepare methodology for UN-Women engagement in MAPS missions to strengthen gender analysis and support integration of GNP into the MAPS framework.	Q3/Q4 2019	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	
Review good practices of UNCT/gender results groups in anchoring GNP in UNDAFs and develop a guidance note for integrating into joint programmes.	Q3/Q4 2019	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	
Provide guidance for country and regional offices on gender analysis of financing policies/flows in development of the integrated national financing framework (INFF).	Q4 2019	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 4: UN-Women to strengthen support of AAAA implementation at country level. It should develop a strategy paper that sets out how UN-Women could support implementation alongside the benefits, and human and financial capacity required for each scenario.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. UN-Women notes the ongoing support to states, particularly in relation to domestic public finances. At the third International Conference on Financing for Development, UN-Women, together with champion Member States, developed the Addis Ababa Action Plan for Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to translate AAAA commitments into policy and financing actions for its operationalization. UN-Women will consider, together with Recommendation 3, how to further expand and better coordinate these efforts in collaboration with other	**Accepted**

UN agencies and partners. UN-Women will develop a paper that sets out a clear plan for support to its country offices for AAAA implementation.

UN-Women co-chairs the gender cluster group of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on the Financing for Development follow-up process. The IATF on Financing for Development and its annual report serve as the primary monitoring process of AAAA implementation. UN-Women will assess, in collaboration with the 17 institutional members of the gender cluster group, how to strengthen coordinated action on AAAA implementation in line with the IATF Report recommendations.

KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Prepare strategy paper for country offices to support implementation of the AAAA with a proposal for human and financial resource requirements.	Q4 2019	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 5: UN-Women to lead an inclusive process to prepare an evolved theory of change for GNP that captures the complexities of UN-Women's approach and provides a medium to long-term strategic overview of the objectives and envisaged process. Country Offices should use the evolved theory of change to prepare narratives tailored to country contexts.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE	Accepted
UN-Women accepts this recommendation. The current ToC for gender responsive governance, articulated in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan (SP) Outcome 2, is defined as "women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems." Outcome 2 focuses on accelerating the development and implementation of gender-responsive laws, policies and programmes through strengthening institutional mechanisms for gender equality and increasing investments, data collection, and monitoring and evaluation. The evolved ToC will provide further conceptual underpinning for UN-Women's work on gender responsive GNP. The ToC will examine multi-level causal chains between activities, outputs, lower-level outcomes and intended higher-level impact and clarify connections between global normative and UN coordination work and implementation at national level. It will focus on how best to link gender responsive governance with UN-Women's priority thematic areas; strengthen monitoring and evaluation of governance; and leverage partnerships at global, regional and country levels for institutionalization. It is envisaged that a refined ToC will support UN-Women's provision of integrated GNP policy and programme support and the assessment of its impact on governance systems and institutions.	

KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Lead inclusive process to develop evolved ToC with regional and country offices.	Q3/Q4 2019	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	
As part of the mid-term review of the 2018-2021 SP, integrate refined Outcome 2 ToC into strategic documents and corresponding guidance for countries.	Q3/Q4 2019 Q1 2020	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	

| Provide technical support to integrate the evolved GNP ToC into Strategic Notes, Annual Work Plans (AWPs) and project documents at regional and country levels. | Q2/Q3 2020 | Policy and Programme Division Regional Directors | Not initiated | |

RECOMMENDATION 6: UN-Women to work proactively through its Regional and Country Offices to support stronger national civil society roles in monitoring budget expenditure and gender equality results achieved through government policy and budget decisions, feeding findings into future planning cycles.				

| **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE** UN-Women accepts this recommendation. As noted in the evaluation, UN-Women has unique experience in engaging civil society, a comparative advantage in the UN system. The Theory of Change for the Strategic Plan Output on GNP (2.5), defined as "more national and local plans are gender responsive", emphasizes the roles of women's organizations in scrutinizing and demanding transparency for government spending on gender equality. To operationalize this recommendation, UN-Women will also draw on lessons from its HIV/AIDS work which has been successful in fostering long-term partnerships with grassroots women's organizations and creating effective channels for their voices to be part of policy forums.

This recommendation presents an opportunity to codify knowledge and lessons learned to identify good practices in sustaining meaningful engagement of civil society. UN-Women will also analyse qualitative data from country reporting on SP Output 2.5, Indicator 2.5.4 (on strengthening women's organizations' capacity to advocate for GRB) for inclusion in knowledge products and guidance. This codification will support regional and country offices to further strengthen their engagement with civil society on gender responsive GNP. | | | **Accepted** | |

KEY ACTION	**TIME FRAME**	**RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION**	**STATUS**	**COMMENTS**
Collect qualitative data on successful practices and challenges for civil society to play an oversight/watchdog role in monitoring and evaluation of gender responsive GNP.	Q3 2019	Policy and Programme Division Civil Society Division	Not initiated	
Prepare guidance, in collaboration with regional and country offices, on best practices in sustaining engagement of civil society in gender responsive GNP.	Q4 2019	Policy and Programme Division Civil Society Division Regional Directors	Not initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 7: UN-Women to work proactively through its Regional and Country Offices to assist national GNP partners, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, to put in place systems to measure the impact of gender-responsive GNP on the lives of women, including marginalized women.				

| **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE** | | | **Accepted** | |

UN-Women accepts this recommendation. *Leaving no one behind* is a central principle of the 2030 Agenda and the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Gender responsive GNP must be rooted in this principle and focuses on ensuring that government plans and budgets are structured to meet the needs of all people, including the most marginalized women and girls. UN-Women has implemented actions to address marginalized women through GNP, as noted in the evaluation, but will work to support countries in more fully capturing these efforts. Recognizing that data and statistics are indispensable for highlighting the needs of marginalized women who are left behind and whose rights are not always prioritized in policy-making, UN-Women's flagship programme on gender statistics aims to create an integrated evidence base that informs decision-making to reach those furthest behind first.

UN-Women will support national partners to establish and integrate monitoring, reporting and evaluation approaches that capture quantitative and qualitative data to assess how gender responsive plans and budgets contribute to changes in women's lives. The response to this recommendation is closely linked with Recommendation 5 on the Theory of Change and Recommendation 9 on Knowledge Management.

UN-Women takes note of the sub-recommendation on conducting sample studies to demonstrate the causal links between gender-responsive budgeting and gender equality outcomes. This activity has been envisaged as part of the UN-Women/IMF strategic partnership to build the empirical base and economic knowledge on these causal links. It will be pivotal in expanding the evidence base in how gender-responsive budgeting contributes to improving budgeting systems overall as well as closing gender gaps.

KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Provide ongoing technical support to country offices to strengthen reporting on impact level results, particularly from local level GNP implementation.	Q3/Q4 2019 Q1/Q2 2020	Policy and Programme Division Regional Directors	Not initiated	
Examine causal links between changes in plans/budgets and impact level results.	Q3/Q4 2019 Q1/Q2 2020	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 8: UN-Women to accelerate the institutionalization of the Results Management System, to articulate results achieved through UN-Women's support, and to gain insight into what is working and how.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE
UN-Women accepts this recommendation. Significant progress was made in the last year to strengthen systematic country/regional office reporting on Strategic Plan (SP) outputs and outcomes through the Results Management System (RMS). In 2018, the first year of implementation of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021, detailed guidance in the form of Methodological Notes was provided to all country offices. This guidance was intended to improve consistency and coherence in country reporting against each SP indicator and contribute to UN-Women's aggregation of data against each SP indicator across countries.

Accepted

Based on the lessons and gaps identified through the 2018 annual reporting process and actual data gathered, UN-Women will improve annual reporting guidance, technical support and narrative questions to improve information and data on how specific results were achieved and the impact these results have on the lives of women and girls as well as key lessons learned and promising/good practices. Additionally, the review of the Outcome 2 ToC (see Recommendation and Response 5) presents an additional opportunity for UN-Women to deliver technical support to country offices on how best to document change processes across the GNP cycle.

UN-Women notes that the RMS needs to be leveraged in a complementary manner with other UN-Women systems. For instance, the GATE system is for evaluation-related data and documentation, and UN-Women Share Point is used for general documentation management while Atlas continues to be the corporate financial and accounting system.

An RMS project module has been piloted in several offices but does not yet include project management functionalities, including project monitoring and reporting. UN-Women has initiated development and roll out of an enhanced system to support the project management module for all offices. This aims to facilitate more effective project management and capture all project-level data and documents to allow UN-Women to aggregate and analyse the data of all projects and capture additional data on organizational projects.

KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Develop a new system for supporting project management with a project module to build the repository of information on UN-Women projects (HQ, Regional and Country levels).	Q2 2020	Policy and Programme Division Division of Management and Administration	Initiated	
Provide guidance, technical support to regional and country offices to strengthen consistency and quality of RMS annual reporting.	Ongoing	Policy and Programme Division	Initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 9: UN-Women to continue the drive for its knowledge management strategy to support knowledge management for GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS and sector-related work.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women accepts this recommendation. UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 highlights the importance of strengthening its knowledge platforms; developing communities of practice (COPs) and bringing together thematic expertise and knowledge from across the organization to advance global norms and strengthen country programming on gender responsive GNP. The corporate Knowledge Management Strategy, promulgated on 31 October 2018, presents the framework for the effective production, sharing and application of knowledge across the organization. UN-Women will identify areas where new knowledge on gender-responsive GNP is needed. The development and dissemination of high-quality knowledge on gender responsive GNP will feed into the integrated package of policy and programme support (see	**Accepted**

Recommendation 1). UN-Women is also refining and updating its intranet to support increased accessibility of relevant information and knowledge across UN-Women. Based on the recommendation for dedicated human resources with GNP expertise, UN-Women will make strategic investments to prioritize GNP knowledge management at global level to grow and maintain a community of practice; facilitate exchanges between regions and countries; conduct webinars on global normative developments; produce practical guidance, policy briefs, knowledge tools and training for country implementation for gender-responsive GNP.

Improved internal knowledge sharing will enable GNP staff across UN-Women to access the most cutting-edge knowledge, guidance and tools to strengthen programming and position UN-Women externally as a thought leader on gender-responsive GNP.

KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Identify knowledge gaps and prepare the KM plan for gender responsive GNP.	Q3 2019	Policy and Programme Division	Not initiated	
Develop and disseminate guidance on the updated intranet.	Q3 2019	Information Systems and Telecommunications	Not initiated	
Conduct webinars on all aspects of gender responsive GNP normative and operational developments.	Q3/Q4 2019 Q1 2020	Policy and Programme Division Regional Directors	Not initiated	

RECOMMENDATION 10: UN-Women to review the use of core funding and consider how it can best be used to enable strategic planning and delivery in GNP.				
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE UN-Women partially accepts this recommendation. As part of the Integrated Budget 2020-2021 and its change management process, UN-Women is reviewing its methodology for core resource allocations to ensure adequate resource distribution within existing levels to all areas of UN-Women's work. It should be noted that, in line with the practice of other agencies, programmable resources are not allocated thematically but geographically; resources allocated to each SP output reflect the needs and prioritization of a given area of work by countries.			Partially Accepted	
KEY ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS	COMMENTS
Review conducted to assess allocations of core resources across the Entity, including on appropriate usage to enable strategic planning and delivery on GNP.	Q4 2019/Q1 2020	Policy and Programme Division Division for Management and Administration Executive Office	Not initiated	