



## INTRODUCTION

This Information Note provides a brief update on how UN-Women has continued to support and implement United Nations Development System (UNDS) repositioning processes and describes the Entity's efforts to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women figure centrally in a repositioned UN Development System.

## 1 Supporting the Resident Coordinator System

UN-Women supports the new Resident Coordinator (RC) system and its funding arrangements. Progress since the last Board meeting in February 2021 includes:

- **Management and Accountability Framework (MAF)** - As required by the MAF, as part of the 2020 Performance Management and Development (PMD) Assessment and the 2021 PMD plans, all UN-Women Country Representatives have been requested to seek feedback and inputs from their respective Resident Coordinator on their UNCT standard performance goals and indicators. This February, UN-Women Country Representatives also participated in the performance feedback survey on their respective Resident Coordinators.
- **RC pool** - UN-Women continues to support the RC pool. UN-Women will be submitting nominations for the Resident Coordination/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) Talent Pipeline, which was launched this April.
- **RC System Funding** - UN-Women has paid its annual cost sharing contribution to the RC system in a regular and timely manner. In 2020, the Entity paid a total of \$5.2 million, of which \$2.6 million comprised an advance payment for 2021.

## 2 Funding Compact

UN-Women slightly exceeded many entity-specific Funding Compact commitments, as presented in the last update in 2020. UN-Women continues to implement activities in support of its Funding Compact commitments, including by participating in the inter-agency working group on the structured dialogue on financing and contributing to system-wide reporting to the Economic and Social Council as part of the Secretary-General's Annual Report on the QCPR.

In 2021, UN-Women, with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, continued to collaborate and coordinate approaches to funding dialogues and the Funding Compact, including in the context of the inter-agency working group on the structured dialogue on financing. This year the group responded to calls made by the Executive Boards of the four New York-based operational agencies to: (i) engage with the UNDCO to formulate a system-wide definition of "joint activities" to support harmonized reporting among UNDSG entities on the Funding Compact indicator on joint activities; and (ii) update the respective Executive Boards on how agencies will "mitigate the effects of potential decreases in global official development assistance, including its impact on implementation of the strategic plan".

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- UN-Women cost share to RC system \$5.2 million in 2020-2021.
- UN-Women is meeting or exceeding 13 out of 14 Funding Compact commitment targets available to report against.
- Share of regular resources to other resources reaches 31% in 2020.
- 84% of field premises in common premises.
- UN-Women leverages its leadership for gender-responsive Cooperation Frameworks.
- UN-Women spearheads Joint Programmes – GBV and Women, Peace and Security the most common focus.

## KEY RESOURCES/LINKS

[Structured Dialogue on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021, Annex A](#)

[UN-Women Strategic Plan: Results Portal](#)

[Report on the UN-Women global response to COVID-19](#)

[Women Count Data Hub](#)

[UN-SWAP 2.0 entity performance results](#)

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Regular resources increased by an approximate 16 per cent in 2020 compared to 2019, and the share of regular resources to other resources slightly exceeded the Funding Compact threshold at 31 per cent. The sustainability of these increases remains unclear for 2021 and beyond.

**Joint Programmes and Pooled Funding Mechanisms** - UN-Women engaged actively in the UNSDG Task Team on Integrated Policy Support and contributed to initial discussions on updating the 2014 UNDG Joint Programming Guidance. UN-Women continued to advocate for the establishment of financial targets in the context of Multi-Partner Trust Funds (MPTFs), building on lessons learned from the Peace Building Fund and the COVID-19 MPTF. These show that financial benchmarks linked to the Gender Equality Marker increase the proportion of programmes and funding dedicated to gender equality.

Gender equality and women's empowerment remain the most common thematic focus of UN Joint Programmes, with the highest number of Joint Programmes focused on elimination of violence against women; and women, peace and security respectively. UN-Women continued its partnership with the Secretary-General's Peace Building Fund (PBF), including on its 2020 Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI), providing expertise, including through secondment of a Gender Adviser to Peace Building Support Office, and contributed to capacity development webinars for the UN system on GYPI. Twenty-eight UN-Women country offices not only have been implementing PBF-funded projects but have also played a convening role and guided UN Country Teams towards implementation of Women Peace and Security commitments. UN-Women is a recipient UN agency in 30 of the Spotlight Initiative programmes and is the technical coherence lead agency in most of the Spotlight Initiative country and regional programmes where it supports RCs and UN Country Teams to implement evidence-based programming to end violence against women.

**Reporting on Financial Data** UN-Women complies with all the UN financial data standards prescribed in the UN Data Cube when participating in UN system-wide financial data reporting exercises (including Chief Executives Board Statistics, UN Pooled Funds Database, and UN Thematic Funds). As UN-Women prepares to implement a new enterprise resource planning system, (ERP) we are working to ensure that the financial data will continue to meet the UN Data Cube standards and enable the organization to comply with UN financial data requirements.

**Financing for Gender Equality** UN-Women has continued collaborative efforts within the UN System, and further strengthened its relationships with International Financing Institutions, to drive financing toward gender equality, holding six Ministerial level roundtables on gender-sensitive COVID-19 response in stimulus packages, co-hosted with ministers, leading Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and the IMF. This has led to UN-Women Memorandums of Understanding with the Asian Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and Action Plans at country level with the MDBs.

### 3 Strengthening System-wide Support to the SDGs and 2030 Agenda

Leveraging its triple mandate, UN-Women continues to provide leadership on gender equality in areas such as gender mainstreaming accountability and tools; gender-responsive planning; creating spaces for women's networks and civil society organizations to influence decision-making; and gender data and statistics.

**Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs** In support of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the UN Decade of Action, UN-Women has launched the Generation Equality Forum initiative to accelerate action to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment by 2030. The Forum kicked off in Mexico City in late March 2021 at the Ministerial level and launched a global call for commitments and public mobilization in the form of six Action Coalitions and Compact on Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action. Commitments will be announced and launched at the Forum in Paris which will be held 30 June-2 July 2021 at the Head of State/Government level. The Action Coalitions represent a new multi-stakeholder approach, mobilizing governments, civil society, youth-led organizations, international organizations, and the private sector to commit to game-changing, concrete actions to tackle the most intractable barriers to gender equality over the next five years. More than 90 stakeholders comprise the Leadership structure of Action Coalitions, including eleven UN entities (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNCDF, UNEP, and others). Over 40 UN entities have been engaged in Forum activities and many have expressed willingness to drive for commitments. As preparations are accelerating towards the Forum in France, UN-Women will also ramp up regional and country level UN system engagement, including through the Resident Coordinators, and the regional UN Issues Based Coalitions; and will develop specific guidance for UN agencies on ways to promote the Generation Equality Forum and the drive for commitments.

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**Political Engagement Strategy on Gender-Based Violence** At the request of the Secretary-General, UN-Women led the development of a political engagement strategy on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the COVID-19 context focused on four pillars: increasing funding to address GBV, enhancing GBV prevention initiatives and declaring them as essential services during the pandemic, strengthening GBV prevention services, and ensuring data collection. UN-Women has worked closely with UNDCO and other UN entities to implement the strategy starting in September 2020, and implementation has continued in 2021. A report detailing the key achievements of the political engagement strategy will be available soon. Some highlights include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) issuing a [statement declaring zero tolerance of SGBV](#) following high level regional curated dialogues; and in Uzbekistan, after the Resident Coordinator's engagement in the context of the 16 Days of Activism, the Senate presented its plans for addressing the four pillars.

**System-wide accountability frameworks and tools for gender mainstreaming** UN-Women continues to promote system-wide accountability for gender equality results, including through its Technical Secretariat Function of UN-SWAP and UNCT-SWAP, and through provision of on demand help desk and capacity development support. Launched at the start of 2021, the UNCT-SWAP platform provides a mechanism to facilitate UNCT reporting and tracking of progress against UNCT-SWAP minimum standards. So far in 2021, 10 UNCTs have already prepared a comprehensive UNCT-SWAP report occurring at the Cooperation Framework planning stage. Results of reporting on UN-SWAP and UNCT-SWAP for 2020 are captured in the 2021 report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the UN system<sup>1</sup>.

UN-Women continues to provide helpdesk support on Gender Equality Markers (GEMs), advocating for the inclusion of financial targets in multi-partner trust funds. A total of 385 users have completed the UN-Women Training Institute online training module 'Implementing Gender Equality Markers'. So far in 2021, UN-Women has organized virtual GEM trainings for UNCTs in Azerbaijan, Jordan, and Liberia, reaching a total of 110 UN staff from 17 entities. The Entity established an internal network comprising 94 country office GEM focal points in 2021 to support the roll-out of the GEM in UN Country Team Joint Work Plans in UN INFO.

**Engagement in UNSDG processes and coordination bodies** UN-Women has continued to contribute to key UN repositioning processes through engagement in the UNSDG and its coordination bodies and mechanisms at the global, regional, and country levels, with the aim of ensuring gender equality is at the heart of UNSDG work. Co-chaired by UN-Women and UNFPA Deputy Executive Directors, key results of the UNSDG Task Team on Gender Equality include guidance on Gender Theme Group Standards and Procedures (forthcoming), and a Technical Note on Gender Mainstreaming into the UNCT Response to COVID-19 (forthcoming). At the regional level, UN-Women has continued to play an active role in Regional Collaborative Platforms and Issue-based Coalitions (IBCs), including as co-convenor of three gender equality focused IBCs and two regional Gender Theme Groups.

### Strengthening system-wide analysis, planning and reporting

**Gender data and analysis** To support joint efforts to monitor the 2030 Agenda, UN-Women has continued to collect data for SDG 5 indicators (5.1.1, 5.2.2, 5.4.1, 5.5.1b and 5.c.1), for which it is a co-custodian. UN-Women has continued to contribute to SDG monitoring by participating in inter-agency mechanisms, including the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on SDGs and the IAEG on Gender Statistics; by contributing and coordinating United Nations system inputs for 2021; and will be producing its forthcoming annual companion report, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot* in partnership with the United Nations Statistics Division. Two additional articles on gender equality and the SDGs were published, in partnership with other United Nations entities, on [poverty](#) and [economic fallout](#) of COVID19, respectively. UN-Women has conducted over 52 country rapid gender assessments in 2020 in the effort to produce timely quality data on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls and has produced guidance and tools on data collection and use in the context of the pandemic (available on the [Women Count Data Hub](#)). The [Counted and Visible: Toolkit to Better Utilize Existing Data from Household Surveys to Generate Disaggregated Gender Statistics](#) was launched in 2021, in collaboration with the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys to produce evidence to inform gender-responsive policies and catalyze actions to leave no one behind. In partnership with UNDP, UN-Women also tracked the policy measures that Member States were taking to address violence against women and girls, captured in the COVID-19 Global Gender Tracker.

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<sup>1</sup> Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. Report of the Secretary-General. E/2021/52 May 2021

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**Alignment and support to the new Cooperation Framework** UN-Women has been actively engaged in the roll out of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework), utilizing its triple mandate to ensure strong gender analysis in Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and gender-responsive Cooperation Frameworks. Internally, UN-Women has established and continues to enhance its 'UNSDCF Support Facility'/one stop shop, providing guidance and advice to country offices for effective engagement in all stages of the Cooperation Framework process, from UNCT-SWAP implementation to inform the new UNCT programming cycle, to CCAs, Cooperation Framework design and implementation.

UN-Women's UNSDCF Support Facility developed a number of resources and knowledge products in 2021, among them the *Gender-Responsive UNSDCF Engagement Training Manual*, developed in a participatory way. The manual provides guidance to facilitators and organizers on how to plan, prepare for, and conduct training on gender responsive Cooperation Framework engagement. The manual is intended for UN-Women internal use; however, given the interest and demand from some UN entities, it has been made available also for external users through UN-Women's website. The Support Facility remains an important mechanism for provision of support and guidance to country offices engaged in Cooperation Framework processes.

### 4 Shared Business Operations and Common Premises

**Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0** Rollout of the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0 has continued in line with commitments by the Secretary General. UN-Women has remained an active participant in this process and is co-chairing with UNDP the BOS at regional level in Europe and Central Asia.

**Efficiency and effectiveness** UN-Women participated in the data collection exercise for the "first of its kind" annual report on efficiency gains and effectiveness improvements covering 2019-2020. UN-Women was one out of thirteen Agencies that participated. Results were comprised of headquarters and field efficiencies (the latter through the BOS modality). The result of this first report demonstrates good progress toward the Secretary General's ambitious annual efficiency gain target of \$310 million, as the report reflected roughly \$100 million in efficiency gains across thirteen Agencies while still awaiting the full benefits of BOS and CBO in years to come. UN-Women reported a total of \$ 1.361 million in efficiency gains for 2019-2020.

**Common Premises** Regarding co-location in common premises, UN-Women is way ahead of the target of 50% by end 2021 having 84% of its field presence in common premises. The entity's goal is to maintain the achieved results of 84% common premises worldwide and/or to increase this number where and if it is financially advantageous. UN-Women has signed the Costing and Pricing Principles and Client Satisfaction Principles and will continue to follow guidance by the Business Innovations Group linked to the Principles in the context of further CBO roll-out. UN-Women participates in the annual UN driven Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory exercise. 37 per cent of UN-Women country offices submitted their GHG data in 2020, which is a 12 per cent increase from 2019.

### 5 Delivering results in a new UNDS

UN-Women has continued to actively engage with a wide range of partners to receive guidance and feedback as it further develops the first draft of the next Strategic Plan 2022-2025. In quarter one and two of 2021, UN-Women organized a series of consultations with Member States of the Executive Board and with civil society and youth organizations at regional level. Together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, UN-Women organized the first-ever joint-consultation with DCO and Resident Coordinators to solicit their feedback on good examples of collaboration and bottlenecks within the UNCTs. All four agencies, as well as UNOPS, are regularly exchanging on the development of their respective Strategic Plans to identify and maximize synergies around common and complementary results and indicators and for achieving SDG success, including with the rest of the UN System. A joint briefing to Executive Board members was organized in April 2021 to present joint approaches within the framework of the next strategic plans, in line with the UN Reforms and the QCPR.

As part of the next Strategic Plan, UN-Women will place more emphasis on its coordination role within the UN System, capturing the development results it achieves through its coordination efforts at all levels. With a focus on achieving impact at scale, through the next Strategic Plan UN-Women will: i) retain the four thematic areas UN-Women has proven expertise in, while strengthening its efforts, and those of partners, to achieve transformative changes that are required to bring the positive changes in the lives of women and girls; ii) Enhance accountability with enhanced and common standards in its products and services; iii) drive financing for gender

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equality and better influence others through expanded partnerships, including for the achievement of system-wide results; iv) invest its limited resources more effectively and ensure continuous business transformation to achieve a stronger, inter-connected field and more efficient Headquarters. The focus on human rights and leaving no one behind will be maintained.

**Business Model Update** As part of the Change Management for the next Strategic Plan, UN-Women is embarking on further business transformation. This includes refining its business model, implementation modalities and global presence footprint to achieve more optimized financing, structure, presence and processes. The aim is to transform into a globally networked and matrixed development organization that is equipped to deliver results, as part of a repositioned UN development system, where they are most needed: in the field. The Entity will refine its approach to managing its organizational resources and treat available funding even more as catalytic investment funds, focusing on more rigor around the recovery of costs while incentivizing planned growth aligned with the UN-Women business model and making use of the opportunities UN reform offers the Entity. The Strategic Plan will come with an even stronger focus on organizational performance management and feature a rebalancing of resource allocation towards the field.

**Outstanding Reform Mandates** UN-Women has provided feedback on the revised draft **Management and Accountability Framework (MAF)**, which is led by UNDCO. The revised MAF will include additional chapters on the Regional and Global level.

UN-Women has continued to contribute to the **Multi-Country Office (MCO)** review and is committed to ensure the implementation of agreements by its Multi-Country Offices in the Pacific and Caribbean, to respond more effectively to the demands of Member States for tailored support among Small Island Developing States (SIDS). UN-Women is participating in the development of Country Implementation Plans that derive from the sub-regional CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, and is providing support to Member States to engage in intergovernmental processes (CSW, CEDAW) and supports improved sex-disaggregated data collection with regional bodies (e.g. CARICOM) and individual Member States.

The UN-Women Independent Evaluation Service participated in UN **system-wide evaluation** efforts by joining the evaluation advisory group for a lessons learned and evaluability assessment of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19 MPTF). The final report provided valuable lessons and recommendations on the value of pooled funds as an incentive for the UN Development System to work together. It also validated the strengthened centrality of collaborative work to achieving stronger results and with diminished administrative burdens in all areas it addressed including gender equality, disability inclusion, leave no one behind, and human rights.

## 6 Conclusion

Together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF and the wider UN system, UN-Women remains fully committed to UN repositioning. Key changes have begun to take root on the ground and have enabled coordinated and integrated approaches to mitigate the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic. More challenges lie ahead, underscoring the vital need for a globally and nationally coordinated, effective and gender-responsive recovery. UN-Women will continue to proactively engage in and support UN repositioning processes at global, regional and country level to ensure a sustainable, gender responsive recovery, in line with the direction provided by the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review for the reformed UN Development System.

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