

# TRANSFORM



## The UN coordination mandate issue

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Why evaluate UN Women's work  
on UN system coordination?

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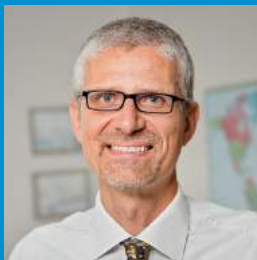
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8 ways to improve the  
implementation of UN Women's  
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## Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present you our seventh issue of Transform, addressing another critical topic: UN system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW). This subject is important not only for achieving gender equality but also for overall development of a more coherent and fit for purpose United Nations.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Independent Evaluation Office undertook a corporate evaluation of UN Women contribution to UN system coordination on GEEW. The main purpose of the evaluation was to inform strategic decision making, organizational learning and accountability, as well as generating knowledge on what works and what doesn't in key aspects of UN coordination to advance GEEW at global, regional and country levels.

The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness and organizational efficiency of UN Women's UN coordination mandate on GEEW. The report provides seven main conclusions and eight recommendations. Highlights of its findings and next steps are included in this issue.

We hope you find this new TRANSFORM issue engaging and the information within useful for strengthening the work of UN Women and its partners worldwide.

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# UN coordination work of UN Women: What is it?

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The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was established by General Assembly Resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence to assist Member States and the United Nations (UN) system in progressing more effectively and efficiently towards the goal of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW). The entity was designed “fit-for-purpose” in that its mandate cuts across the three pillars of the United Nations and integrates normative support, coordination functions and operational activities.

As defined in its founding resolution and subsequent strategic documents, UN Women’s UN coordination role includes three aspects: leadership and advocacy related to “agenda setting” in the United Nations; promoting accountability of the UN system in relation to its GEEW commitments; and coordinating by engaging in system-wide and inter-agency efforts that promote and advance GEEW at global, regional and national levels. Furthermore, UN Women has the responsibility to

follow up on gender parity commitments in the UN system.

UN Women’s UN coordination role is its newest role, as it was not formally included in or adopted from the mandates of any of its predecessor entities, although some GEEW coordination existed prior to the establishment of UN Women. The UN Women coordination role is an “organizational” mandate that is not limited to any one division, unit or level of the organization, including decentralized level.

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**The entity was designed “fit-for-purpose” in that its mandate cuts across the three pillars of the United Nations and integrates normative support, coordination functions and operational activities.**

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## Milestones in the UN reform process

### 2006

The Secretary-General's High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence recommended that the UN system should "Deliver as One" at the country level with one leader, one programme, one budget and, where appropriate, one office.

### 2008

General Assembly Resolution 62/277 stated that subsequent consultations on system-wide coherence would focus on harmonization of business practices, funding, governance, GEEW, and "Delivering as One" at country and regional levels.

### 2010

Resolution A/RES/64/289 established UN Women in response to acknowledged weaknesses in the UN system's ability to effectively and coherently address issues of GEEW.

### 2012

Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review Resolution (67/226), which provided the UN system its mandate for development operations for 2013-2016, highlighted several areas for improved functioning in relation to system coherence, e.g., related to the Resident Coordinator system, "Deliver as One", and simplification and harmonization of business practices.

### 2014

UN Development Group standard operating procedures were developed to support a second generation of "Deliver as One" for countries wishing to adopt the approach.

WHAT DO I NEED  
TO KNOW TO  
MANAGE OR  
CONDUCT AN  
EVALUATION AT  
UN WOMEN?

HOW CAN  
EVALUATION BE  
A DRIVER FOR  
CHANGE TOWARDS  
GENDER EQUALITY  
AND WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT?

HOW IS GENDER-  
RESPONSIVE  
EVALUATION  
DIFFERENT  
FROM OTHER  
EVALUATION?

# HOW TO MANAGE GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

## EVALUATION HANDBOOK



Find out how UN Women manages gender-responsive evaluation  
with the new UN Women Evaluation Handbook:  
*How to manage gender responsive evaluation.*

The Handbook is available at:  
<http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org>



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# Why evaluate UN Women's work on UN system coordination?

**Are we doing the right things? Are we doing things right?  
Are we doing these things on a scale that makes a difference?  
To get better results, we need to know what works. We also need  
to know what doesn't work and how to fix it.**

In 2015, UN Women undertook a corporate evaluation with the aim to assess the relevance, effectiveness and organizational efficiency of UN Women's UN system coordination mandate on GEEW. It also considered how a human rights-based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the implementation of this mandate. The evaluation covered the period 2011 to 2015 at country, regional and global levels, including its integration with operational work and intergovernmental normative support.

The evaluation was commissioned and managed by the Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women and was conducted by

an external independent evaluation team between February 2015 and February 2016, with the active involvement of internal and external reference groups and an external evaluation expert group.

This evaluation is expected to feed into UN Women's efforts to promote the gender equality goal and gender mainstreaming in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the next Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. In addition, findings from this evaluation informed the mid-term review of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2014–2017. It is also expected to inform the development of the next Strategic Plan.



## How relevant and effective is UN Women in achieving its mandate through coordination support work?

*From focusing on strategic ways of influencing the UN system, to strengthening coherence, capacity, mobilization and accountability to removing barriers and leveraging success: seven main conclusions of the evaluation.*

### **Working with other UN entities: Taking stock and looking ahead**

The creation of UN Women and the agency's coordination mandate need to be understood against the backdrop of broader reform processes within the UN development system. Over the past two decades, UN Member States have reiterated calls for the United Nations to increase its efficiency and effectiveness and reduce duplication and fragmentation. Furthermore, the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), requires the international community, including the UN development system, to expand their existing notions of collaboration and coordination.

Despite noteworthy successes, efforts to improve coordination and coherence continue to be limited by the current structure and governance of the UN development system. The continued fragmentation of the UN system, separate governing bodies, and agency-specific staff accountabilities weakens accountability among UN agencies (horizontal accountability). For these reasons, inter-agency coordination continues to be based on voluntary participation and lacks strong incentives.

UN funds and programmes are increasingly reliant on earmarked non-core funding. At the same time, contributions to "Delivering as One" related One Funds have been declining, and donors are increasingly earmarking resources within these funds. These factors foster



# WHAT WORKS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

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The portal makes available more than 400 evaluations and helps promote the exchange of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations related to gender and development.

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competition rather than collaboration and coordination among UN agencies, and they limit the ability of UN country teams to focus on jointly identified priorities.

In addition to the above-mentioned challenges, UN Women's evolution since its creation in 2010 has taken place against the backdrop of chronic underfunding. Although UN Women has found creative ways to function within these financial limitations, the funding shortfall is an underlying issue in the ability of UN Women to completely fulfil its mandate and meet the high expectations set for it.

Despite the above challenges, UN Women is strategically positioned to advance GEEW within the UN system, making the entity's establishment a notable milestone in the UN reform process.

#### PERSPECTIVES FROM UN ENTITIES ON UN-SWAP

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*UN Women has had very strong coordination and leadership on the UN-SWAP. That has been very valuable and speaks to the core of the agency's mandate.*

—UN entity

*The UN-SWAP has been in the making since 2006. It needed UN Women to come in and coordinate the approach. The fact that they've done it successfully is indicative of their innovation.*

—UN entity

”



## Looking forward: Navigating a complex system

**1** UN Women has implemented its UN coordination role in a highly complex environment. The challenges in coordinating efforts in the UN system are well known and widely acknowledged.

At the macro level, these challenges include vertical accountability mechanisms and competition for resources, which limit the ability of UN entities to focus on jointly identified priorities and horizontal accountability mechanisms. At the micro level, UN staff members with common goals and values—including feminist values that are key for forging a shared identity and a transformative approach to gender

equality work—face challenges in trying to foster a sense of community for GEEW work.

The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights the need and provides the space to reassess the factors that are inhibiting coordination and collaboration in the United Nations. UN Women has the opportunity to continue to influence these discussions in global mechanisms, such as the

Chief Executives Board, and processes, such as the UN Economic and Social Council dialogue on the longer term positioning of the UN development system and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. Addressing systemic challenges is also the responsibility of Member States, given that they have encouraged UN agencies to think, plan and work together coherently to deliver better results.

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*UN Women has the opportunity  
to continue to influence  
these discussions in  
global mechanisms*

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LEFT: UNICEF/NYHQ2010-2563/NOORANI RIGHT: UNICEF/UNIT89493/PANDAY

## Looking backward: Despite some challenges, a lot has been done

**2** In five years, UN Women has built a solid foundation for the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of its UN coordination role. It has made notable contributions to strengthening UN system coherence, capacity, mobilization and accountability for GEEW related work.

UN Women's implementation of its mandate on UN coordination has added value to the normative, intergovernmental and operational work of the UN system. At the global level, UN Women has used its unique GEEW-focused mandate and technical expertise to coordinate or lead processes culminating

in the development and adoption of guiding (normative) frameworks and related UN commitments, such as the SDGs or the monitoring of UN system performance on GEEW as outlined in the widely accepted UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

UN Women has been the driving force behind establishing or revitalizing several GEEW-related

collaboration mechanisms, including: the global UN-SWAP network, regional and country level Gender ThemeGroups, and UN Development Group global and regional mechanisms in which UN Women is an active and acknowledged player. UN Women regional offices have become critical advocates in both strategic and operational coordination mechanisms and also provide technical inputs to country-level processes.

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*UN Women's implementation of its mandate on UN coordination has added value to the normative, intergovernmental and operational work of the UN system.*

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# I want equality for women and men.

I am **HeForShe**



Join me at [HeForShe.org](http://HeForShe.org)

We're inviting men and boys around the world to stand together in solidarity – with each other and with women – to create a shared vision for gender equality. And it starts by answering a simple question... who are you?



UN Women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Photo credit: Celeste Sloman



ARMINE GRIGORYAN / WORLD BANK

At the country normative level, UN Women has led or played a key role in UN system efforts to jointly advocate for GEEW—contributing to changes in national policies facilitated by the fact that national-level actors perceived the United Nations as speaking with one voice. UN Women has also worked with other UN entities to reduce duplication of efforts and strengthen joint reporting against normative frameworks (such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and Security Council

Resolution 1325 reports) and encouraged them to commit to applying these frameworks in their own programmatic work.

UN Women has also worked with other UN entities to strengthen the inclusion of GEEW in UN country team workplans, common country assessments and UN Development Assistance Frameworks. In this regard, UN Women has encouraged links between global and regional normative frameworks for gender equality and human rights aligned with national priorities.

*At the country normative level, UN Women has led or played a key role in UN system efforts to jointly advocate for GEEW*

## UN Women contributions to coherence and mobilization through Gender Theme Groups and Results Groups on Gender

### TYPE OF INITIATIVE

**Planning, monitoring and reviewing joint projects and/or the UN Development Assistance Framework for gender content and consistency, gaps and duplication**

**Supporting, guiding and/or following up on the Gender Scorecard recommendations**

**Bringing together the UN system around the SDGs, Beijing +20 national reviews, and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women reporting**

**Developing common messages and joint activities for campaigns**

### EXAMPLES

The Gender Theme Group in Colombia reported having taken a proactive stance by proposing elements that should be taken into account in the new UN Development Assistance Framework.

In Serbia, UN Women and the Gender Theme Group reported having ensured that gender equality was properly addressed in the new common country assessment and resulted in an entire section on the issue.

In Kyrgyzstan, UN Women reported that its role in the Gender Theme Group allowed women and girls to be more prominently considered in the projects of UN agencies, funds and programmes.

In Cote d'Ivoire, the Gender Theme Group supported the implementation of the Gender Scorecard with the broader objective to incentivize a stronger inclusion of gender equality in the new UN Development Assistance Framework.

In Kyrgyzstan, Beijing+20 consultation efforts were prioritized in the Gender Theme Group workplan for 2014 and were eventually conducted by UN Women with the UN Development Programme, UN Children's Fund, UN Population Fund, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Resident Coordinator's office. The consultations led to a nation-wide campaign and helped inform the 4th National Periodic Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Report.

In Fiji, the Gender Working Group supported national reporting on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by Pacific Island countries. In 2014, with the support of UN agencies and development partners, 10 Pacific Island countries submitted the *"2014 Asia Pacific Survey on Progress and Implementation of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action"* and 7 Pacific Island countries submitted national reviews.

In nine of the reviewed Gender Theme Group workplans, wide audience advocacy campaigns, including the UNiTE campaign/ Orange Day, HeForShe and Beijing+20, have been planned and coordinated in the Gender Theme Group. Campaigns were conducted in at least 18 reviewed countries.

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## TYPE OF INITIATIVE

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## EXAMPLES

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### Organizing other joint events

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In 2014, the United Nations in South Africa organized through the Gender Theme Group the National Gender Summit (UN Development Programme, UN Population Fund, UN Women), the Critical Thinking Forum (UN Women, UN Population Fund) as well as a forum on Financial Service Institutions (UN Development Programme, UN Women).

In Uruguay, UN Women and UN agencies organized and participated in workshops on gender and the labour market, which were also attended by civil society organizations, academia and government, and facilitated discussions around strategic priorities and roadmaps for the country useful both for UN Development Assistance Framework development and for national planning.

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### Coordinating training for capacity development of local partners (civil society organizations, government) or of UN agencies or donors

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In Mali, the Gender Theme Group committed to support the training of 80 mediators that could participate in national and international fora on conflict resolution for Mali. UN Women, through the Gender Theme Group, also carried out training of donors.

In many other countries (such as Argentina, Mali, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Jordan, Timor-Leste, Uruguay), the Gender Theme Group is expected to be the key mechanism for supporting capacity development on GEEW within the UN system. In Mexico, for example, the Gender Theme Group conducted capacity assessment among the agencies of the UN country team and will develop a training plan to improve capacity in GEEW. A similar initiative was undertaken in Timor-Leste, where a multi-year UN staff capacity development plan is already in place.

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### Developing analytical products to inform government

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In Myanmar, the Gender Theme Group conducted research and data collection to inform the development and implementation of an operational plan for the National Strategic Plan for Advancement of Women 2013–2022.

In Mali, a Situational Analysis undertaken by the Gender Theme Group led to the discovery of sexual slaves in a women's prison.

The Gender Theme Group in Uruguay produced a review of the Uruguayan legislative agenda from a gender equality and intergenerational equality perspective. The initiative was financed through contributions from 10 agencies that are Gender Theme Group members.

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## Showcasing good practices despite challenges

**3** Despite external challenges, internal limitations and the short time it has been in operation, UN Women in its UN coordination role has been able to demonstrate good practices.

UN Women offices at Headquarters, regional and country levels have developed promising strategies to address complex coordination issues. UN Women has been most successful when it has taken a participatory and consultative approach to engaging other UN entities. At Headquarters level, this has been best illustrated in the development and roll-out of the UN-SWAP, where more than 50 entities were involved in designing

the framework. Existing inter-agency mechanisms have begun to take ownership of certain indicator areas and there is a considerable sense of ownership of the UN-SWAP beyond UN Women. Similarly, UN Women effectively facilitated consultations with UN entities and Member States as part of the 2013 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, resulting in stronger language on GEEW.

Other good practices are those that help increase the evidence base on GEEW and identify the system's capacity and each entity's collaborative advantage. At the regional level, joint research and joint programming have provided an evidence base on issues of concern to regions, countries and UN country teams. In

the West and Central Africa region, UN Women's Regional Office carried out a mapping of UN gender capacity at the regional level for presentation to the UN Development Group with the aim to inform a more coherent regional-level approach to GEEW based on a clear understanding of each entity's areas of strength and weakness.

At the country level, UN Women country offices have worked to facilitate the sharing of technical and knowledge resources among UN country team members. UN Women has also helped to clarify the purpose of the Gender Theme Groups, encourage the development of realistic workplans, and focus the Gender Theme Groups' work on issues that

matter to the UN country team and the national context. Having clearer, more realistic and relevant Terms of Reference and workplans has helped Gender Theme Groups to achieve greater results.

UN Women has also demonstrated how substantive and issue orientation of coordinated efforts enhances links to programming and GEEW results, often with regard to the enabling environment for GEEW in a particular context. In several countries reviewed, joint advocacy contributed to new or revised national legislation or to national action plans and other frameworks to ensure greater gender mainstreaming in national policy. For example, Colombia showed good practice in collaboration among UN Women, UN Development Programme, UN Children's Fund and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that women were able to participate in peace process talks in Havana, Cuba.

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## Promising practices in the field

### Developing gender Mainstreaming Strategies To Guide UN country team response to emergency

In Sierra Leone, UN Women played a key role in developing a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy to guide the UN country team response to the Ebola crisis and address emerging gender dimensions of the Ebola Virus Disease in the country.

### Making more visible and reporting on the UN Women coordination mandate

In Mexico, Tunisia and Malawi, there was joint UN policy advice and/or dialogue with national governments to ensure compliance with gender equality and human rights commitments.

### Providing feedback on entities' strategies and working with other Working Groups on normative issues (convention work)

UN Women reviews and provides gender mainstreaming advice to peer agencies on their country strategies and programme documents (e.g., UN Women Mexico) and to the portfolio of country-level UN Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat projects (e.g., through the Gender Theme Group in Kyrgyzstan) and reviews the gender approach in UN joint programmes (e.g., Fiji Multi-country Office).

The Gender Theme Group in Fiji worked with the Human Rights Working Group to ensure that a gender perspective was reflected in the Universal Periodic Reports of Fiji, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands.

### Building UN system GEEW capacities

Capacity development is an area that has not been fully developed, although this is only partly within the coordination mandate. Apart from online training offered by UN Women, some country offices (for example, Tanzania, Fiji, Uruguay) have opted for thematic seminars, workshops or forums with internal and external experts that both share internal (to the UN system) good practices and introduce additional experiences to further thought and practice in various gender issues. These are highly appreciated and very well attended.

### Developing Theory of Change

In the Arab States, the Regional Office conceptualized a normative, coordination, advocacy and knowledge management Theory of Change.



*UN Women has been most successful when it has taken a participatory and consultative approach to engaging other UN entities*

### **Substantive/issue orientation of inter-agency working groups**

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Office has adopted a focus on flagship initiatives in the Gender Theme Group. The Asia and Pacific Regional Office has also created sub-working groups of the Gender Theme Group focused on substantive areas (UNiTE, Gender Statistics and women, peace and security) and have produced disseminated knowledge products under these platforms. The UNiTE Campaign has also been a key entry point for UN Women's coordination role and has been instrumental in bringing together UN agencies to work on a specific GEEW issue.

### **Joint programming and joint research at the regional level**

In East and Southern Africa and in Asia and the Pacific, the regional offices have engaged in joint research with other UN partners on topics such as ending violence against women and extractive industries.

### **Agreeing on a way of cooperating with key sister agencies at the regional level**

In East and Central Asia, UN Women developed a regional partnership framework between the UN Population Fund, UN Development Programme and UN Women, the three entities based in Istanbul that set the parameters for operational cooperation among the entities.



## The coordination mandate is at a tipping point

**4** More needs to be done to ensure concrete demonstration of GEEW results of UN system coordination and shared accountability for GEEW across the UN system.

As stated in the UN Women's Coordination Strategy, coordination must advance concrete development results for GEEW. Overall, the evaluation has shown that, with the right people, resources and positioning, UN Women can support UN coordination that leads to progress on GEEW at the country level. Nonetheless, clear linkages between the work carried out through UN Women's UN coordination role and results on GEEW are currently difficult to discern.

Across the United Nations, there is also limited evidence that improved UN system capacity for GEEW (to which UN Women has contributed through tools, frameworks, knowledge and skills) has been systematically translated into more or stronger GEEW results (including performance in the UN system's internal changes, such as gender parity). Despite noted progress in strengthening UN country team capacity for gender mainstreaming, UN Women is still (and in

some cases increasingly) regarded as the main player expected to not only drive and monitor UN country team commitments to GEEW but also to implement them—rather than the UN country team taking responsibility. Support by the leadership of the UN country team and the country's own gender equality dynamics also affect the extent to which UN Women is able to promote and facilitate stronger links between UN coordinated efforts and GEEW results.

*Overall, the evaluation has shown that, with the right people, resources and positioning, UN Women can support UN coordination that leads to progress on GEEW at the country level.*



## UN accountability for GEEW at the regional level

Both regions and countries provide inputs to UN-SWAP reporting through the Headquarters of the individual entities. The regional UN Development Group encourages UN country teams to be accountable for GEEW (by applying the Gender Scorecard) and is involved in the performance appraisal of the Resident Coordinator and the UN country team.

However, the accountability of the regional UN Development Group and the regional coordination mechanism for GEEW commitments is not clear in the current structure and approach for ensuring overall institutional accountability for meeting the UN GEEW commitments.

## Gender Scorecard at the country level

Gender Scorecard exercises had been conducted in only 9 of the 26 countries considered in the country portfolio review. The situation in the six case study countries may be illustrative of the range of experiences with the Gender Scorecard globally.

- Scorecard exercises had been carried out in three of the six countries (Fiji, Jordan and Malawi).
- In two countries, recommendations have been acted on (for example in Fiji, one of the first Scorecards, prior to UN Women; and in Jordan in 2014) and both formed Gender Theme Groups based on recommendations.
- In Mali, a Scorecard exercise was in the planning stages. In Mexico, the exercise was not carried out because the UN country team preferred a different approach that consisted of a capacity assessment of the UN country team on GEEW.

Within UN Women, factors that limit demonstration of GEEW results include insufficient resources, variability of skills, expertise and staffing across UN Women offices, and limitations in how the UN coordination role is conceived and thus reported (as focusing on processes rather than results). The link between better UN coordination and changes for GEEW has not yet been clearly articulated, demonstrated or operationalized. UN Women's Coordination Strategy provides a step in the right direction, but it does not yet sufficiently

clarify why and how contributions to the internal workings of the UN system will lead to results in the lives of women and men. Neither UN Women nor other UN entities systematically monitor or are able to clearly demonstrate such links. Although in early stages of development, the Flagship Programming Initiatives are expected to provide opportunities to demonstrate how coordination among entities, mobilized around a theory of Change, strengthens the ability to deliver results for GEEW.

*UN Women is still (and in some cases increasingly) regarded as the main player expected to not only drive and monitor UN country team commitments to GEEW but also to implement them*

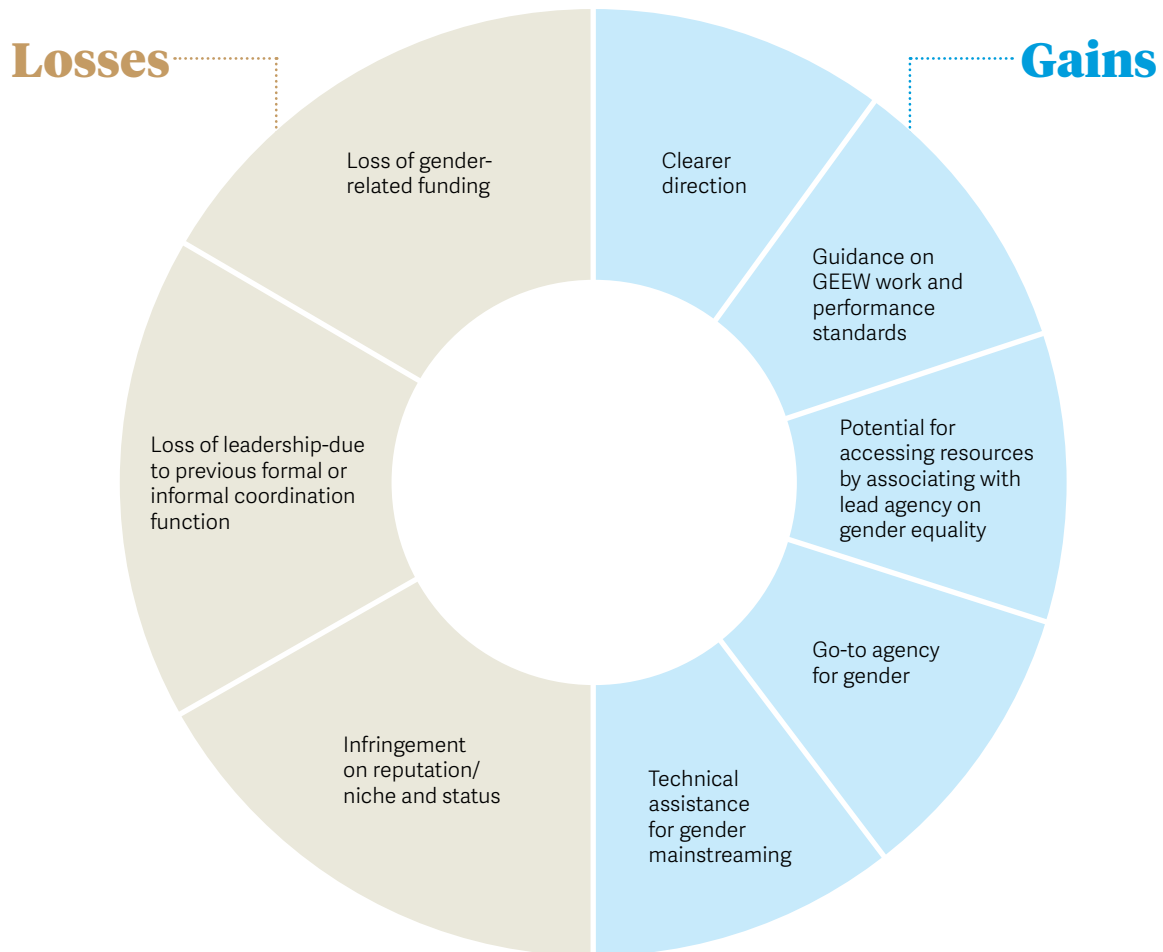


## Member State perspectives on UN system coordination on GEEW

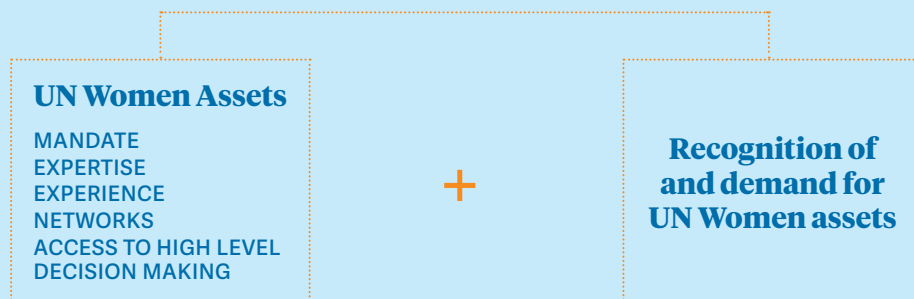
While improvements in coordination have been observed in certain cases, the representatives of Member States consulted for this evaluation at the country level did not always see or identify the effects of coordinated efforts on GEEW of the UN system. In countries like Mexico and Mali, government respondents indicated the need for greater integration of fundraising and programming efforts of different UN agencies on GEEW, given that entities still approach government agencies individually. Similarly, donors in country also pointed out the need for greater coordination among UN entities and greater clarity about each entity's comparative strength in the area of GEEW. Knowing that UN Women has a coordination role, they questioned whether or not that role could not be reinforced with regard to UN entities and their fundraising with donors for initiatives on GEEW.

These coordination issues, however, were raised against a backdrop of broad Member State recognition of the UN system's contributions in the area of gender equality. In both the 2014 and 2015 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review Monitoring Surveys of Programme Country Governments, gender equality was one of the top two thematic areas in which Member States judged the UN contribution as having been "especially significant."

## Perceived gain and losses of other UN entities arising from UN Women's coordination mandate



### UN Women Strategic Positioning





## Coordinating and getting coordinated

**5** UN Women's strategic positioning for UN coordination is shaped not only by its existing assets, but also by the extent to which UN partners recognize its added value and demand its coordination efforts.

*Broadly speaking, UN Women's positioning for UN coordination is more consistently acknowledged by others at the global level than in the field.*

Given the vertical structure of the UN system, coordination relies on the voluntary cooperation of UN entities. The evaluation found that reputation based on expertise and authority (e.g., moral, financial or mandate-related) often became key levers to facilitate coordination. In addition, dimensions of reciprocity and trust constitute core relationships to ensure successful coordination. Whether and how other UN

actors perceive, interpret and make use of UN Women's assets is also strongly influenced by their own needs, stakes and interests. The implementation of UN Women's UN coordination mandate is therefore subject to the multiple perspectives and competing interests of individual agencies.

Broadly speaking, UN Women's positioning for UN coordination is more consistently acknowledged by

others at the global level than in the field. This is partly due to the variety of national contexts and relationships between UN entities at the field level, as well as a variety of implementation and presence modalities by UN Women in the field.

UN Women's positioning in UN coordination is stronger within the normative mandate versus the operational one. It is also strong with regard to promoting accountability



**Ensure that knowledge, experiences and good practices from the field are used to inform global processes**

frameworks for GEEW commitments at Headquarters level, as it is seen as having the legitimacy to do this. It is clearly positioned to lead on UN coordination on cross-sectoral issues (for example, in the SDGs), and advocacy and implementation of normative frameworks on GEEW (such as Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women).

UN Women's positioning in thematic areas has been more varied and contested at Headquarters, regional and country levels, as there is a perception that it may infringe on the status, positioning and influence of other actors in these areas. In particular, in the area of humanitarian action there appears to be a considerable gap between UN Women's potential to add value and other UN actors' acknowledgement and demand for UN Women's engagement.

Key assets that UN Women can draw upon in relation to its UN

coordination mandate are its unique GEEW-focused mandate, which requires a cross-sectoral perspective or a more holistic vision for GEEW; its reputation for expertise, especially in relation to GEEW in general; and its access to extensive networks, especially grassroots women's organizations and specific government ministries (such as national gender machineries) that other UN entities do not normally reach. This constitutes an important asset in terms of UN Women's ability to facilitate inclusive consultation processes.

Issues that, until now, have tended to limit UN Women's strategic positioning in relation to UN coordination include the following:

- a) Field presence and representation in global inter-agency mechanisms. What counts as a relevant organizational asset can vary slightly by issue and thematic area.
- b) Financial incentives. UN Women does not offer the financial incentives that other coordinating entities in the

UN system may be able to provide.

c) Overlapping mandates. The existence of other entities with overlapping mandates for coordination in a particular thematic area creates greater imperatives for dialogue on complementarities.

d) Operational capacity. Actual or perceived gaps in UN Women's operational capacity in the field also negatively influence its ability to contribute to or lead inter-agency discussions. At the field level, the perception of lack of operational capacity also affects UN Women's credibility in terms of its UN coordination role. This is particularly the case in countries where UN Women does not have a country office but only programme presence.

e) Coordination architecture. Formal inter-agency coordination mechanisms can provide a structure and legitimacy to coordination efforts.

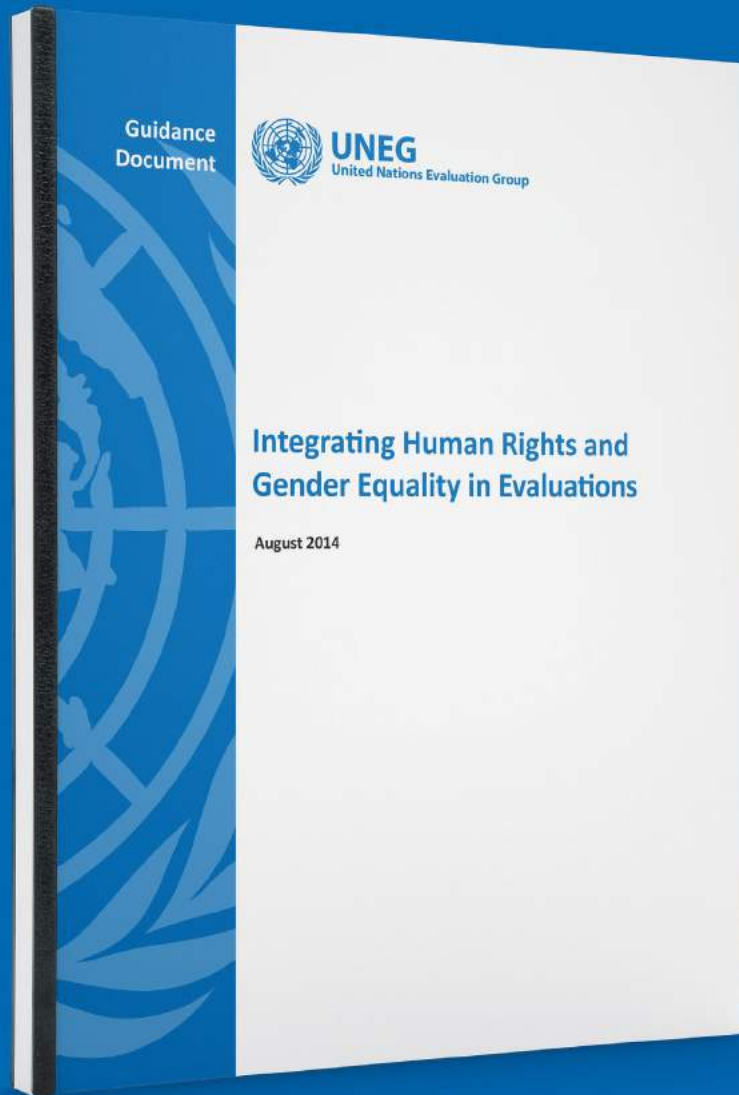
In the area of *women, peace and security*, UN Women's positioning has been facilitated by the strong UN architecture for gender, peace and security that is accountable to the UN Security Council. In contrast, in the context of *humanitarian action*, there is more limited institutional coordination on GEEW. The absence of a gender architecture and accountability framework in the humanitarian system, and the fact that UN Women has not been granted membership in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, have meant that its positioning in different country contexts has varied according to factors such as the strength and perspective of humanitarian coordinators and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the capacity of UN Women offices.

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LEFT: UNICEF / UKRAINE RIGHT: UN PHOTO/MARTINE PERRET

# How can the evaluation community improve human rights and gender equality responsive evaluation within the UN system and beyond?



The latest guidance from the United Nations Evaluation Group can help you navigate the process to integrate human rights and gender equality into evaluation. Read *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations—A guidance document to improve human rights and gender equality responsive evaluation throughout the UN system.*

Available at [www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616)



**UNEG**  
United Nations Evaluation Group



## Walking the talk

**6** The United Nations is not leading by example with regard to gender equality. While UN Women has set some positive practices as examples for other UN entities, it does not yet consistently model principles of GEEW.

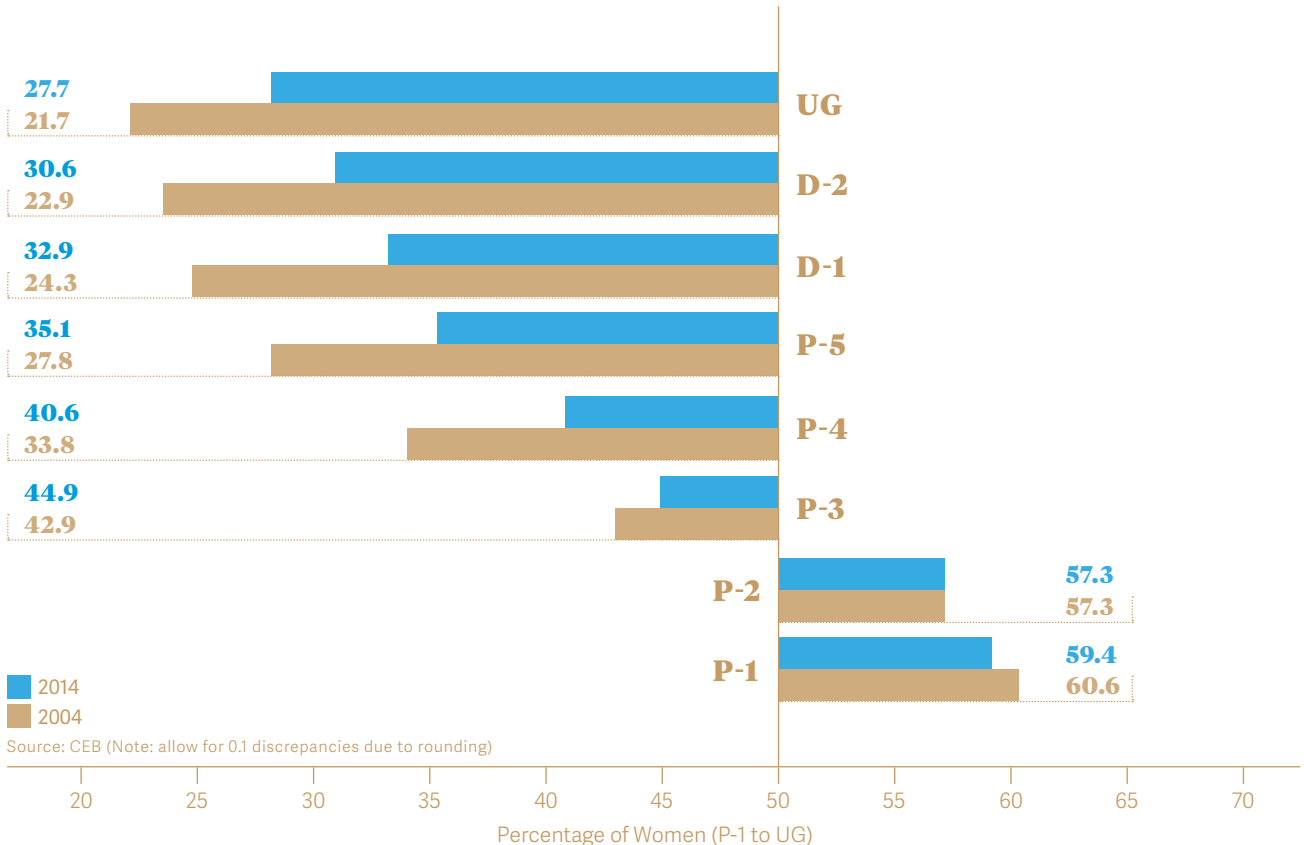
To date, the UN system is not yet consistently modelling the principles of GEEW that it promotes—as shown in the modest progress made so far in reaching a 50:50 gender balance. Data indicate that only limited progress was made towards achieving the goal of gender parity within the UN system during the period under review (2011–2015). From 2011 to 2013, the representation of women in professional and higher

categories increased marginally, from 40.9 per cent to 41.8 per cent overall. Parity was reached at P1-P2 levels, but otherwise, an inverse relationship between professional level and representation of women remains. The percentage of women who are Resident Coordinators increased from 37.1 per cent in 2011 to 39.5 per cent in 2013, and National Professional Officers in the UN system are within 10 percentage points of achieving gender parity. In the UN-SWAP (2014 reporting period), 77 per cent of entities reported that they had not achieved equal representation of women at the P-4 level and above, and this is one of the indicators with the poorest performance across the UN system.

Furthermore, the UN system and its individual entities are not yet consistently assessing underlying causes of inequality to inform programming. In the area of joint programming, the UN experience has not always provided evidence of more intersectoral, multidimensional work that can address some of the more structural causes of inequality. The ability of UN Women to influence change in this regard has been negatively affected by many UN entities not yet sufficiently investing in (or decreasing investment in) their own gender architecture.

## Gender parity, by level, in the United Nations system,

AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2004 AND 31 DECEMBER 2014



UN Women's own organizational culture reflects the fact that it has incorporated staff from predecessor organizations, particularly the UN Development Fund for Women, as well as from many other UN agencies. They have brought a rich set of skills and knowledge of the UN system into UN Women, as well as the challenge of forging a coherent organizational approach and identity on the basis of the mandate specificities.

While UN Women has exceeded representation of women at all staff levels in all locations, policies and practices on issues such as maternity and paternity leave and overall working conditions are not yet considered best practice. This is due in part to constraints to setting internal policy, as UN Women must adhere to UN system policies and administrative rules for the international civil service.

*The UN system and its individual entities are not yet consistently assessing underlying causes of inequality to inform programming.*



UN PHOTO/JC MCLWAIN

### Trends for 31 December 2004 to 31 December 2014 on contracts of a year or more, at all locations

	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5	D-1	D-2	UG	TOTAL
<b>2004</b> representation of women (% of total staff)	61%	57%	43%	34%	28%	24%	23%	22%	37%
<b>2014</b> representation of women (% of total staff)	59%	57%	45%	41%	35%	33%	31%	28%	42%
Change in percentage points <b>2004 to 2014</b>	-1.3%	0%	2%	6.8%	7.4%	8.6%	7.8%	6.1%	5%
Average annual increment	-0.1%	0%	0.2%	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%
Year at which gender parity will be reached	Attained	Attained	2039	2028	2034	2034	2039	2051	2030

**Source:** CEB. Prepared by the Focal Point for Women, Coordination Division, UN Women, February 2016. (Note: Allow for 0.1-0.4 discrepancies due to rounding)  
**Website:** <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/women-in-the-united-nations/current-status-of-women>



LEFT: UN PHOTO/SYLVAIN LIECHTI RIGHT: PHOTO MINUSMA/MARCO DORMINO

## Promising practices in the Malawi Country Office

- » Prior to all weekly staff meetings, there is a half hour discussion of a key gender equality issue related to the normative framework or current issues
- » Open concept office encourages discussion and cross-sector information sharing and analysis
- » Open door policy of the Representative, so that staff can discuss issues as they arise
- » In recognition of limited advancement opportunities for contract staff and consultants, staff are provided with personal coaching (from an external professional)
- » In evaluation team meetings with the staff, the Representative speaks last and supplements or adds on anything that was missed, clearly encouraging the staff (at all levels) to express themselves freely

## Results of this approach

- » A clearly committed, motivated, confident and empowered staff
- » Lively and critical discussion and analysis of gender issues, leading to competence and coherence in the gender message from UN Women to sister agencies and other partners
- » Efficiency—several UN partners commented on how much UN Women gets done with so few resources.



## When the rubber hits the road

**7** UN Women's rapid evolution has required ongoing adjustments in systems and practices that have not yet consistently translated into efficient and effective support for implementation of the UN coordination mandate.

UN Women started to implement its UN coordination function while establishing itself as an entity. As in any organization undergoing change, the transformations have been accompanied by uncertainties about processes, systems, roles and responsibilities, and have been compounded by chronic under resourcing.

The ongoing transition and under resourcing have negatively affected UN Women's ability to fully

implement its coordination mandate. Some noted areas for improvement may sort themselves out once recent structural changes have been in place long enough to become fully effective. Some other issues, however, are likely to require targeted action, in particular the following:

a) Alignment of UN Coordination Strategy with Strategic Plan. The UN Women Coordination Strategy has four outcome areas that are not visibly aligned with the results of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The results of "coordination" are currently framed as part of the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework, yet there is a growing call for linking UN coordination to development results. UN Women's Coordination Strategy describes the dimensions of UN

Women's coordination mandate, but it does not help clarify the purpose and intent of UN Women's coordination role and its relationship to the other roles (normative, operational) in its composite mandate.

b) Guidance in setting priorities. UN Women's Coordination Strategy has not been translated yet into guidance to help set priorities and clarify what is expected from UN Women in different thematic and/or geographic contexts. It also does not provide guidance on how these expectations may be adjusted in contexts where UN Women's ability to cover all dimensions of the mandate is constrained (for example, in countries where UN Women has programme presence). As a result, both UN Women staff and UN partners

## UN WOMEN'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ROLE

“

*“It’s a very useful role and we work a lot together, but I think they could do a lot more if they were better resourced. UN Women is strapped for cash and people. If they were better off, there’s more they could do. We’ve had a very positive experience working together, but UN Women doesn’t always respond as quickly and efficiently as we’d like because of resource constraints.”*

—UN ENTITY

”

have a range of understandings and expectations of UN Women’s UN coordination mandate.

c) Staffing. UN Women has faced challenges in linking global initiatives to the field and vice versa. There are a limited number of staff members at Headquarters responsible for responding to needs in the field, and these responsibilities are distributed across divisions. UN Women regional offices note insufficient staff to provide support and guidance at the country level, with key staff having to divide their attention between implementation of UN coordination work at the regional level, support at the country level, and planning responsibilities. Regional offices have not been able to consistently respond to demands from country offices for

more specialized and tailored support—either in coordination more generally or in the thematic areas of expertise (e.g., through thematic advisers based in regional offices). Country offices have also stressed the issue of staffing constraints for effective UN coordination efforts.

d) Ensuring internal coherence. UN Women’s UN coordination mandate is an organization-wide mandate. Several key divisions have a strong role to play in shaping and ensuring the coherence and effectiveness of UN Women’s overall approach to UN coordination. Shared responsibility for coordination between divisions is appropriate given the integrated approaches, networks and expertise required. At the same time, it can be a barrier to coherence (in

terms of messaging and guidance) and efficiency. This applies to the relationships between divisions at Headquarters and to the relationships between Headquarters and the field.

*The ongoing transition and under resourcing have negatively affected UN Women’s ability to fully implement its coordination mandate*

## Constraints to UN Women's UN coordination role

### COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONSTRAINTS

#### Bureaucratic

##### COUNTRY LEVEL

- » Absence of full delegation of authority (in programme presence countries) or delays in receiving that delegation of authority have limited UN Women's ability to fully engage with the UN country team.
- » UN culture that pays more attention to status (position level) than to content/skills, which has also limited UN Women's ability to influence the UN country team in some contexts.

##### REGIONAL LEVEL

- » That same UN culture that emphasizes status and hierarchy affects the extent to which UN Women can participate in several processes (e.g., Regional Directors at D1 level cannot participate in the face-to-face performance appraisal of the Resident Coordinator).

#### **EFFORTS TO OVERCOME CONSTRAINTS 2011-2015**

- » Individuals ensured that they could get job done, despite bureaucratic delays
- » Individuals draw on network, and relationships.
- » In some cases, UN Women participated in performance appraisal via HQ procedure established by UNDG.

#### Time

##### COUNTRY LEVEL

- » Insufficient time to dedicate to UN system coordination—balancing the demands of programmes versus coordination role can be a particular challenge.
- » Evolving organizational demands (such as Results Management System) associated with need for better evidence of and accountability for results.

##### REGIONAL LEVEL

- » Evolving organizational demands (such as Results Management System) associated with need for better evidence of and accountability for results.

- » Individuals have put in more time and worked harder to deliver, yet this is not a sustainable practice

#### Human resources

##### COUNTRY AND REGIONAL

- » Lack of enough people and/or the necessary expertise and skill sets in certain contexts.
- » Unrealistic expectations of what can be accomplished by certain posts (e.g., Planning and Coordination Specialists in regional offices)
- » Absence of specialized advisers, which can be critical in fulfilling certain coordination demands, for example in situations of conflict.

- » Training provided to staff
- » Added "Deputy" post in a few countries
- » Added certain support positions (e.g., Programme Analyst post to support SPC Specialist in East Asia and Pacific)
- » Raised funds that allowed placement of specialized staff (e.g., for conflict settings)

#### Limited flexible and pooled funding

##### COUNTRY AND REGIONAL

- » UN Women has lacked flexible funding (including seed funding) to support coordinated efforts of the UN system at the field level.
- » Limited availability of pooled funding mechanisms to support coordinated work of the UN system at the field level.

- » COs have found creative ways of re-assigning non-core resources to support this work.
- » COs are raising funds from private sector.
- » ROs are engaged in resource mobilization, and in Europe and Central Asia have added a Resource Mobilization Specialist position.

#### Strategic direction and guidance

##### COUNTRY AND REGIONAL

- » Insufficient guidance and strategic direction provided by Headquarters with regard to priorities for UN system GEEW coordination, or guidance that is not useful to the field.

- » Plans to develop guidance and additional supportive materials
- » Some ROs clarifying nature of this mandate through approach papers or Theories of Change

#### Navigating stakes of other entities

##### COUNTRY AND REGIONAL

- » UN system stakeholders have particular stakes in each context, often related to funding, history, reputation, branding and overlapping mandates.

- » Environmental scanning and negotiation of spaces with actors on case by case basis
- » Agreements on roles and responsibilities or standards of practice (negotiated at HQ or field level)

A large group of young women, likely students, are gathered together, many wearing purple t-shirts with the UN Women logo. They are all smiling and raising their hands in the air, creating a sense of excitement and collective action. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

MOVING FORWARD:

# 8 ways to improve the implementation of UN Women's coordination mandate

*The evaluation identified eight recommendations that are critical for UN Women's future contribution to UN coordination. Many factors that affect UN Women's ability to implement its UN coordination mandate are inherent to the UN system and lie outside UN Women's control and/or sphere of influence. Similarly, the effects of chronic underfunding for UN Women cannot be underestimated.*

BRAZIL - UN WOMEN AT 2016 RIO OLYMPIC GAMES

UN WOMEN, THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC) AND ALWAYS CELEBRATED AT TEATRO DE CÂMARA IN CIDADE DAS ARTES, THE 'ONE WIN LEADS TO ANOTHER' INITIATIVE, WHICH GIVES AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADOLESCENT GIRLS LIVING IN SOCIALLY VULNERABLE CONTEXTS TO USE SPORT AS A TOOL TO REDUCE GENDER INEQUALITIES AND BUILD AND MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE IN THEIR LIVES. WITH THE ATTENDANCE OF NEARLY 200 OF THE GIRLS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT, THE EVENT HIGHLIGHTED THE POWER OF SPORT TO CHANGE LIVES AND BREAK SOCIAL STEREOTYPES.



## Flagship Programming Initiatives: Aiming to scale up GEEW results through coordinated approaches

In response to an evolving development context, in 2015 UN Women developed 12 Flagship Programming Initiatives that allow it to:

- » Scale up results through partnerships to meet the expectations for GEEW embedded in the SDGs and other intergovernmental decisions.
- » Ensure that UN Women is fit for purpose to support the implementation of the SDGs at the national level.
- » Successfully access high-quality, non-core funding to complement its core resources and implement its strategic plan.

The Flagship Programming Initiatives are multi-stakeholder scalable programmes that address multiple SDGs in a synergistic manner. Each is based on a comprehensive Theory of Change that identifies actions required by national actors, civil society organizations, the United Nations, and official development assistance and private partners to achieve transformative results for women and girls.

Consultations carried out with UN Women staff suggest that they offer promising ways to both address UN Women's financial constraints (and raise necessary non-core funding) and work collectively—with UN entities and others—to achieve gender equality results. These initiatives are an opportunity to experiment with approaches that are win-win in terms of working with sister agencies and reducing the threat of greater competition for limited financial resources.

**1** UN Women should continue to actively engage in strategic dialogue with other UN entities and Member States, through existing mechanisms at all levels of the United Nations, to catalyse greater system coordination and coherence, particularly on GEEW.

Systemic issues such as vertical accountability, weak incentives for coordination, the still-limited capacity of some UN entities to address GEEW, inconsistent support from the resident coordinator system, and varying stakeholder expectations of UN Women's mandate are best addressed through existing system-wide mechanisms, (such as the Chief Executives Board and its pillars, in particular the UN Development Group), Member State

directives (such as the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review), and the demands that Member States place on UN entities.

This recommendation suggests that UN Women should continue supporting the United Nations in overcoming systemic challenges for UN coordination. This would position UN Women as forward looking and help resolve confusion about its UN coordination role and leadership on the ground.



© CHARLOTTE KESL / WORLD BANK

## 2 UN Women should align the current Coordination Strategy with the Strategic Plan and current UN context, bringing greater focus on UN coordination as a means for development results and changes for GEEW.

UN Women has made laudable efforts to reinforce and clarify its UN coordination mandate both externally and internally, while implementing the mandate at the same time. Yet entities in the UN system, as well as UN Women staff, note that the mandate requires greater clarification and better integration with other dimensions of UN Women's mandate. This, together with the changes in the global context reflected in the SDGs and the UN Economic and Social Council dialogues on the longer-term positioning of the UN development

system, provides a strong rationale for UN Women to review and clarify its UN coordination mandate and fully align its Coordination Strategy with its Strategic Plan. This process includes making more explicit the link between UN coordination and GEEW development results.

## 3 UN Women should align the scope of its mandate with its resource base.

UN Women has faced constraints in funding its coordination role, establishing synergies, and setting priorities among the different dimensions of its composite mandate. Recognizing the limited funding base and that the institutional budget for UN Women may not increase, resourcing the coordination role will require either: a) reallocating or realigning existing core and institutional budget resources;

b) better integrating financing for the UN coordination function in UN Women's resource mobilization strategy; or c) reducing the scope of the mandate to align with current resource levels. This will require clearly communicating to the Executive Board the implications of underfunding in UN Women's ability to cover all dimensions of UN coordination. In light of current discussions on UN pooled financing mechanisms to bridge the SDGs financing gap, other complementary financial solutions could be taken into account.

If it is decided that the current scope of UN Women's mandate will be maintained, then the resources to support that mandate in the field will need to be found or reallocated. Further re-articulation of the three mandate dimensions may help streamline efforts to integrate UN coordination work in the context of the Flagship Programmes Initiatives.



## 4 UN Women should provide operational guidance for UN Women staff on how to approach, plan, implement and report on its UN coordination role in different geographic and thematic contexts.

Due to the rapid evolution of the organization and the challenges of priority setting, there are still gaps in strategic alignment and operational guidance provided to thematic areas and the field. The evaluation team heard repeated requests from UN Women staff at the country and regional level, and from the different thematic areas, for guidance that could be adapted to their particular contexts. Often, the guidance requested was for tools, examples and documented experiences that could help them avoid duplication of effort.

The UN Coordination Division and Policy and Programme Divisions should work together to identify the type of guidance to prioritize in the short and medium term. Such guidance should also emphasize UN Women's role in ensuring that its support for UN system coordination adds significant transformative value—that is, that it nudges the UN system to do a better job in analysing and addressing underlying causes of gender inequality.

## 5 UN Women should enhance the role it plays in promoting UN system accountability for its commitments on GEEW.

UN Women has been effective in promoting the UN system's accountability for its commitments in GEEW, e.g., through the UN-SWAP, the role

of the Focal Point for gender equality in the United Nations, and by serving as the Secretariat and/or contributing inputs for global studies commissioned by the Secretary-General or intergovernmental bodies.

UN Women should continue to monitor and guide the UN system in strengthening implementation of its GEEW commitments and ensuring that the GEEW agenda retains its transformative potential and does not become a technocratic exercise. In doing so, it needs to ensure that greater attention is paid to related processes (consultation, feedback) and recognize that its role in promoting accountability—and challenging the system to do better—can lead to tensions with other entities, depending on how it is exercised.

In playing this role, UN Women can draw more systematically on the important external “check” on the UN system that civil society can

provide. UN Women has a global and articulate constituency, which is one of its primary sources of strength and influence. The alliance between UN Women and civil society can contribute to helping the United Nations explore approaches that are more transformative with regard to gender power relations. Since it is often difficult to be a critic from within, leveraging relationships with civil society networks outside the UN system could be strategic in terms of eliciting honest critiques of the UN system.

In addition, UN Women's UN Coordination Division should continue to enhance accountability of the UN system through the UN-SWAP and harmonize existing accountability mechanisms.

## 6 UN Women should strengthen its efforts to ensure that GEEW principles are consistently taken into account by the UN system in the areas of UN Women's thematic expertise.

This recommendation suggests actions to strengthen UN Women's strategic positioning as a coordinating entity on GEEW in its thematic areas of work (outlined in its Strategic Plan 2014–2017). UN Women should strengthen its thought leadership capacity in its thematic areas. Expertise is one of the key factors in strengthening its reputation and credibility as a coordinating entity. The development of organizational expertise (as opposed to periodically contracted expertise) does have resource implications. However, it may also be possible to leverage



strategic partnerships with civil society and academia to engage in research that can inform the UN system's work in certain thematic areas.

UN Women should enhance its analytical capacity by convening actors and sponsoring system-wide assessments of collective experiences and undertakings in key thematic areas. This could be a powerful way to enhance UN Women's credibility as an agency that catalyses greater learning among entities.

As noted in Recommendation 1, UN Women should engage in discussions with principals and/or the Senior Management of other UN entities to ensure that there is clarity with respect to each entity's role and collaborative advantage in the thematic areas. This will ensure that work in the field is smoother and better coordinated.

UN Women has come a long way in the two years since its humanitarian strategy was adopted (2014) and it began its engagement in this area. Although it is still having difficulties gaining acknowledgement

for its value added in humanitarian settings, the evaluation noted several good practices UN Women has developed in different humanitarian contexts. In order to ensure that UN Women can continue to play an effective role in this area of work, it should:

- Continue to move towards more systematic and consistent engagement in coordinating GEEW for humanitarian action, drawing on its partnership with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Its humanitarian strategy emphasizes upstream advocacy, guidance and standard setting, accountability and capacity building. These are aligned with UN Women's UN coordination mandate and appear to be contributions that are welcomed by partners such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

- Propose a review of the "gender architecture" and accountability framework for GEEW in the humanitarian area, which would include identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current coordinating

structures on GEEW. The lack of gender architecture can be interpreted as one of the challenges for coordination and positioning of UN Women within the larger humanitarian system.

c) Continue its advocacy to become a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which would give it a stronger voice in the humanitarian system.

d) Create a repository of “results” that shed light on the unique role UN Women can fulfil and that no other entity is undertaking. Estimate the cost of inaction on gender equality in terms of lives, women’s and girls’ plights, and other consequences (short and long term).

## 7 UN Women should modify policies and practices in order to model a gender-responsive organization for the United Nations.

UN Women is part and parcel of UN policies and administrative rules and thus may be constrained in the extent to which it can modify policies for the international civil service. Thus, this recommendation must be discussed by Senior Management in terms of what can be done to push the boundaries of those externally-driven policies and procedures and what is possible to change internally within the remit of UN Women.

In the effort to lead by example, UN Women should strive to demonstrate best practices in its own organizational policies and practices, culture and approaches to programming. Examples include reviewing maternity and paternity leave and flexible work policies, promoting an egalitarian organizational culture that capitalizes on staff members’ passion for the mandate, and promoting transformative programming models. UN Women’s ability to lead by example in these areas will enhance its credibility in guiding the system. Senior Management should identify key gaps and prioritize areas that it will strengthen to move towards UN Women becoming a model entity.



**Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)** is a network of Gender Focal Points representing 25 entities of the UN system. It was established in 2001 following the creation of the Chief Executives Board. UN Women is Chair of IANWGE and also serves as the Network's Secretariat.

As noted throughout several of the global issue areas examined by this evaluation, IANWGE has been a key mechanism for UN Women in its efforts to engage the UN system. During the past two years, UN Women has taken steps to strengthen the role and profile of the network, but data collected to date suggests that more could be done to engage network members in this process.

Members of IANWGE who were consulted on the relevance and effectiveness of the group as an inter-agency coordination mechanism had mixed views. Those who commented positively on IANWGE most often cited its utility as a platform for bringing focal points together and as a forum for knowledge and information sharing. At the same time, survey respondents expressed the desire for: (a) greater clarity with respect to IANWGE's mandate and more clearly defined roles and responsibilities; (b) shared leadership (and ownership) of the network, in particular with respect to defining the agenda and chairing meetings; and (c) a more participatory environment, with greater opportunities for substantive discussions and strategic thinking. Data from interviews largely corroborate these sentiments.



**UN Women should strengthen gender-focused coordination mechanisms at Headquarters and in the field that have been key to its approach to implementing its UN coordination mandate.**

As part of its efforts to strengthen coherence, tap into synergies, and reduce duplication on GEEW in the UN system, UN Women has contributed to and taken steps to strengthen inter-agency groups such as the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the UN Development Group's Gender Equality Task Team at the

global level, and Gender Theme Groups at the regional and national level. These groups have contributed to GEEW capacity and results, but there is a need to further improve their relevance and effectiveness. There may be a need, for example, to streamline groups at Headquarters (such as the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the UN Development Group's Gender Equality Task Team), to increase shared ownership of these groups and to ensure ongoing relevance to the United Nations and national and regional contexts. These mechanisms are particularly critical for UN Women's role as a backbone organization for collective efforts on GEEW in the United Nations.

## RESPONDING TO THE EVALUATION

# Learning from this formative evaluation — UN Women's response

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The first corporate formative evaluation of UN Women's contribution to UN coordination for GEEW provides timely insights and lessons learned. It yields an assessment of achievements in leveraging the collective strength of the UN system, while suggesting ways to further enhance UN Women inter-agency functions to promote greater UN coherence on GEEW.

UN Women itself is the result of Member States' resolve to achieve greater UN coherence. Its universal mandate integrates development, peace and security, humanitarian action, and human rights through normative support, coordination and operational activities. This

integration enables UN Women to work cohesively across the three "pillars" of the United Nations and to support governments in achieving their gender equality commitments.

UN Women sees its role as a true catalyst for change by utilizing its normative, coordination and operational mandates in a fully integrated fashion to support the implementation of the SDGs. Consistently with this vision, the Commission on the Status of Women at its 59th and 60th sessions requested UN Women to fully leverage the UN system for the effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development.

UN Women's engagement in inter-agency coordination at all levels has been closely linked with supporting the achievement of substantive changes for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Inter-Agency Network for Women and Gender Equality, for example, will continue to promote substantive exchanges across entities on gender related aspects of global policy debates and intergovernmental processes.

UN Women will review its Coordination Strategy and related Theory of Change to address the findings of the evaluation, consistently with those from the evaluation of

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Deputy Executive Director,  
Intergovernmental Support  
and Strategic Partnerships Bureau

**YANNICK GLEMAREC**

Deputy Executive Director,  
Policy and Programme Bureau

**“No one can whistle a symphony, it takes a whole orchestra to play it.” –H.E. Luccock**

the implementation of UN Women's regional architecture that is currently underway.

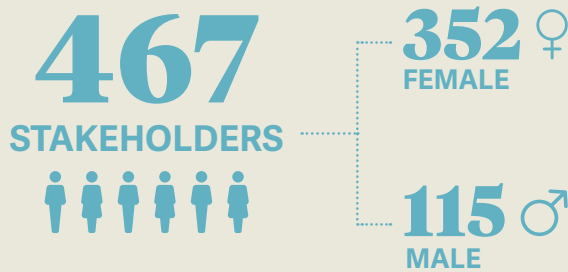
The Flagship Programme Initiatives currently being rolled out will constitute a key aspect of the updated Coordination Strategy. Thanks to their comprehensive Theories of Change, the Flagship Programming Initiatives provide clear opportunities to capitalize on the vast expertise and capacity available in the UN system to support transformative change for GEEW beyond the specific contributions of UN Women.

UN Women will work with regional coordination mechanisms, regional UN Development Groups and UN country teams to

strategically position gender equality and the empowerment of women. It will focus on the finalization and roll out of the new UN Development Assistance Framework guidance for UN country teams, which includes a strong focus on human rights and gender equality as key programming principles for the UN Development Assistance Framework.

UN Women will also continue to enhance its role in the coordination of humanitarian action, including by strengthening its partnership with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

UN Women is working with the network of gender focal points in the UN system to further promote UN accountability for GEEW. At the corporate level, a new UN-SWAP will be piloted in 2017 and is expected to be rolled out in 2018. UN Women is also working with the UN Development Programme—within the UN Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality—to update the existing Gender Scorecard for implementation by UN country teams. The new tool will align with the UN-SWAP, the SDGs and the new UN Development Assistance Framework guidance. It is expected to be made available to UN country teams through the UN Development Group in 2017.



UN Women, UN entity, civil society and  
Member State stakeholders interviewed

HQ: **86**  
Regional level: **51**  
Country Level: **330**



FIELD VISITS TO  
**6** countries and  
HQ New York



VIRTUAL CONSULTATIONS  
WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN  
**6** regions &  
**6** countries



PORTFOLIO REVIEW OF  
**26** countries,  
including  
**5** countries  
with no UN Women presence



TOTAL NUMBER OF SURVEY RESPONSES

**72** IANWGE members and UN-SWAP Focal Points  
**86** UN Women Staff  
**470** Members of GTGs & other  
country-level inter-agency groups  
**72** Regional stakeholders

SECONDARY DATA SOURCES:  
UN Development Operations Coordination Office,  
Office of Internal Oversight Services, QCPR



INTEGRATED FEMINIST AND  
SYSTEM-BASED APPROACHES

# Comprehensive methodology for a broad evaluation

The design and conduct of this corporate evaluation were enhanced by applying a gender-responsive perspective and introducing a systems-thinking approach. The evaluation used mixed methods including field observation, interviews, document review, country portfolio review and surveys.

At the global level, emphasis was placed on four global areas that have been a critical part of UN coordination work at Headquarters: SDGs, Beijing+20, UN-SWAP and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. The nature of UN coordination work, contributions and challenges faced in thematic areas were also explored.

Field-level perspectives were gathered through country visits (to Fiji, Kyrgyzstan, Jordan, Malawi, Mali and Mexico), Skype and telephone consultations with stakeholders in six additional countries (Guinea-Bissau, Myanmar, Serbia, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uruguay), and in all six regions, including members of UN regional coordination bodies. This coverage ensured that evaluation findings were informed by qualitative information from a variety of country contexts and across UN Women presence models.

A country portfolio review provided a broad overview of work in field offices in a purposeful sample of 26 countries, including 5 countries with

no UN Women presence at the time of collecting data (Argentina, Chad, Eritrea, Malaysia and Montenegro). Overall, the evaluation team interviewed 467 stakeholders (at Headquarters, regional and country levels), most of whom were representatives of peer organizations in the UN system. Representatives of Member States (programme countries and donors) and, to a lesser extent, academia and civil society representatives were also consulted, particularly at the country level.

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